ALAN MOORE OMNIBUS
(ORIGINAL COLOR EDITION)

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The SAGA of The
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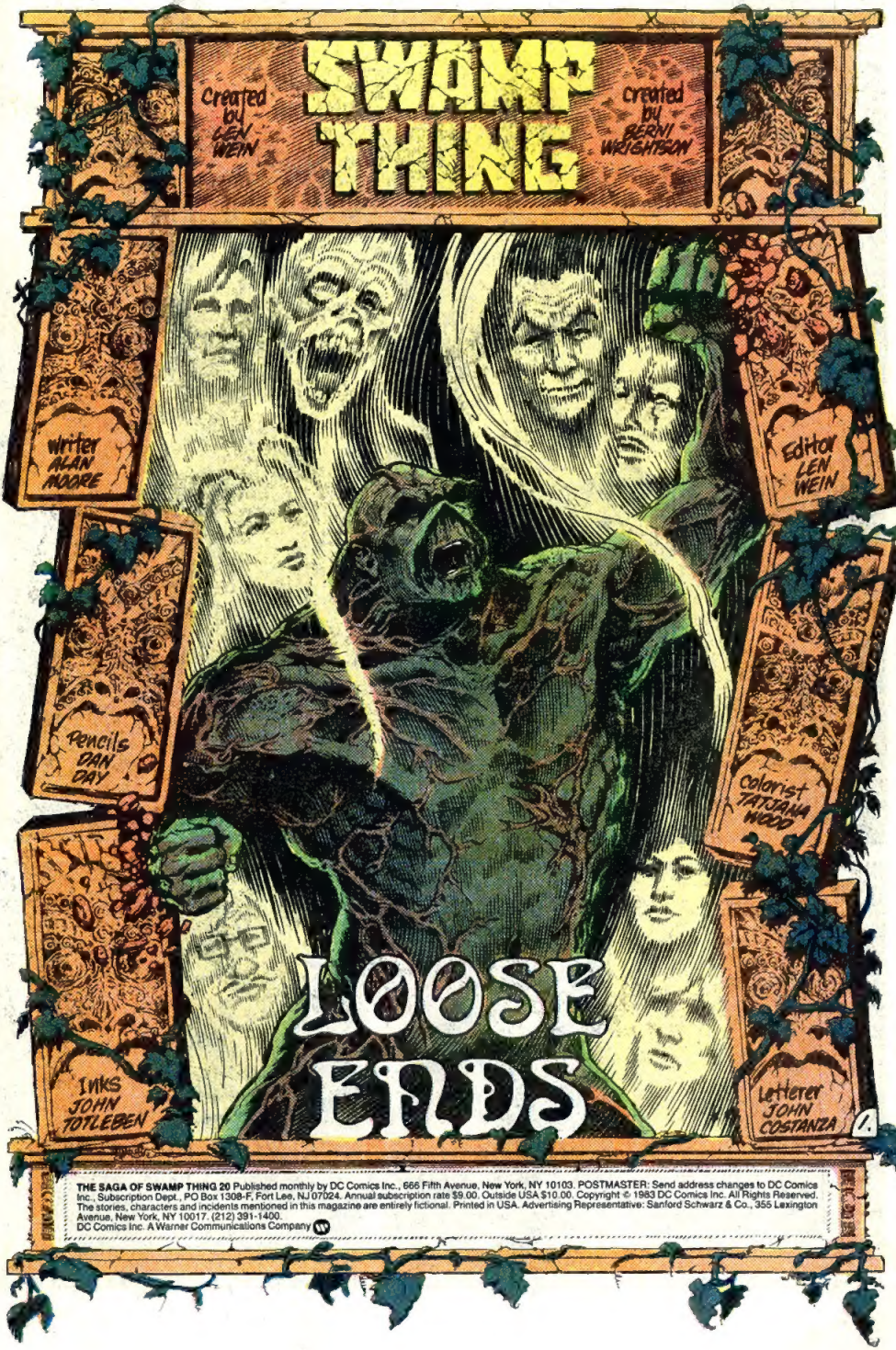

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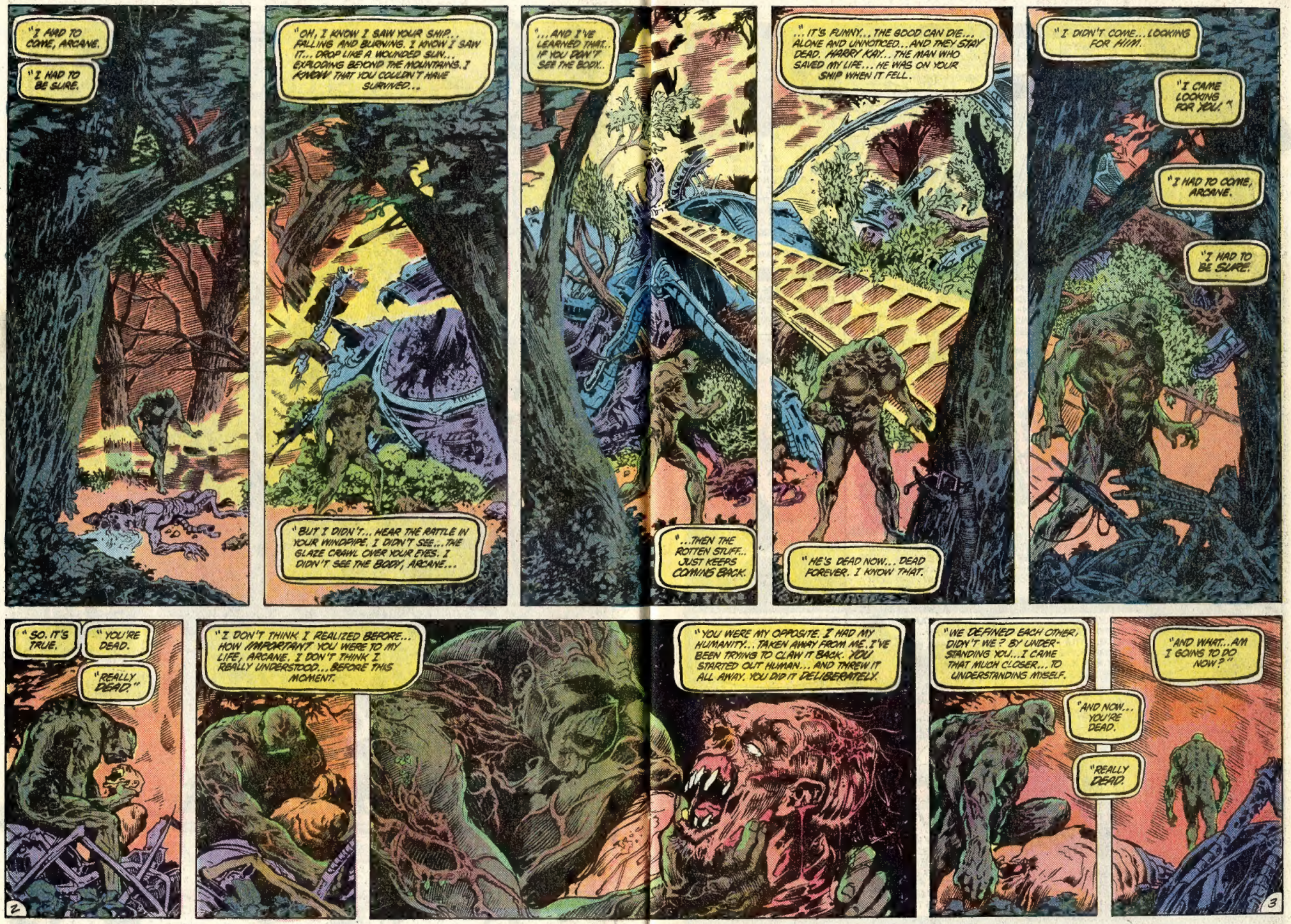
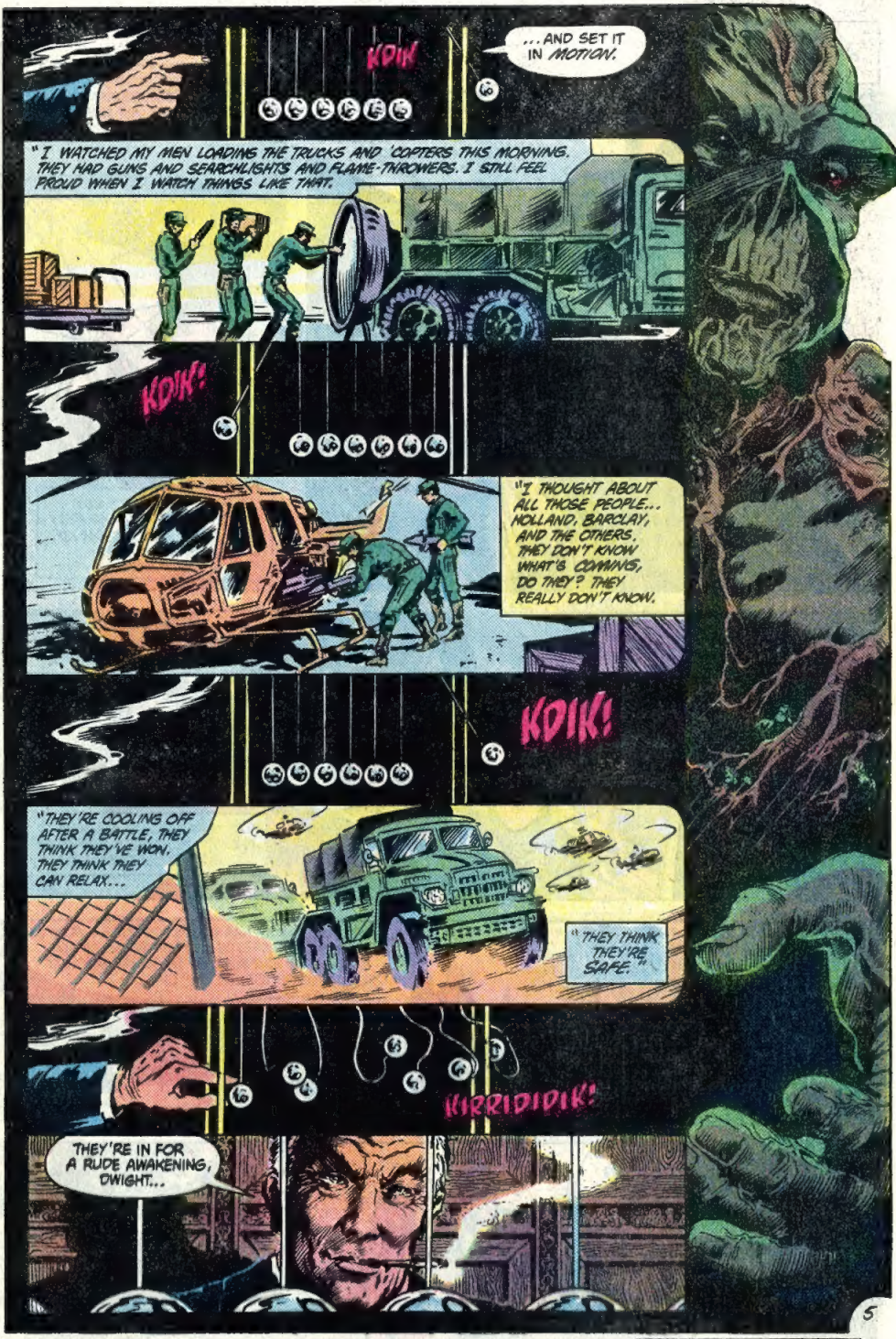

"I HAD TO COME, ARCANE.
"I HAD TO BE SURE.
"OH, I KNOW I SAW YOUR SHIP... FALLING AND BURNING. I KNOW I SAW IT... DROP LIKE A WOUNDED SUN... EXPLODING BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS. I KNOW THAT YOU COULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED...
"BUT I DIDN'T... HEAR THE RATTLE IN YOUR WINDPIPE. I DIDN'T SEE... THE GLAZE CRAWL OVER YOUR EYES. I DIDN'T SEE THE BODY, ARCANE...
"...AND I'VE LEARNED THAT... IF YOU DON'T SEE THE BODY...
"...THEN THE ROTTEN STUFF... JUST KEEPS COMING BACK.
"... IT'S FUNNY... THE GOOD CAN DIE... ALONE AND UNNOTICED... AND THEY STAY DEAD. HARRY KAY... THE MAN WHO SAVED MY LIFE... HE WAS ON YOUR SHIP WHEN IT FELL.
"HE'S DEAD NOW... DEAD FOREVER. I KNOW THAT.
"I DIDN'T COME... LOOKING FOR HIM.
"I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU."
"I HAD TO COME, ARCANE.
"I HAD TO BE SURE.
"SO. IT'S TRUE.
"YOU'RE DEAD.
"REALLY DEAD."
2
"I DON'T THINK I REALIZED BEFORE... HOW IMPORTANT YOU WERE TO MY LIFE, ARCANE. I DON'T THINK I REALLY UNDERSTOOD... BEFORE THIS MOMENT.
"YOU WERE MY OPPOSITE. I HAD MY HUMANITY... TAKEN AWAY FROM ME. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CLAW IT BACK. YOU STARTED OUT HUMAN... AND THREW IT ALL AWAY. YOU DID IT DELIBERATELY.
"WE DEFINED EACH OTHER, DIDN'T WE? BY UNDERSTANDING YOU... I CAME THAT MUCH CLOSER... TO UNDERSTANDING MYSELF.
"AND NOW... YOU'RE DEAD.
"REALLY DEAD.
"AND WHAT... AM I GOING TO DO NOW?"
3

ELSEWHERE:
WELL, GENERAL? YOU KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
DO? ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? I'M GOING TO KILL THEM, DWIGHT. I'M GOING TO KILL ALL OF THEM.
THEY'RE ALL THERE, DWIGHT. OUR AGENTS HAVE CONFIRMED IT. THE CABLES, BARCLAY, THE TREMAYNE WOMAN... AND THE THING THAT WAS ONCE ALEC HOLLAND.
THE SWAMP THING.
ACCORDING TO OUR PEOPLE IN VIRGINIA, THE HOLLAND-CREATURE HAS JUST CONCLUDED AN EXTREMELY NOISY BATTLE WITH AN OLD ADVERSARY OF HIS.
THIS ADVERSARY--A MAN NAMED ARCANE--HAD A STRANGE KIND OF AIRSHIP. HE RAN IT INTO A MOUNTAIN RANGE. BANG. END OF BATTLE.
I HAVE THE SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHS. TAKE A LOOK.
MMM. SO YOU'RE GOING FOR THE U.F.O. APPROACH?
WELL, IT'S WORKED BEFORE. THE LOCALS ALMOST CERTAINLY HEARD THE SHIP CRASH.
WE POSE AS GOVERNMENT PEOPLE, TELL THEM IT WAS A U.F.O., TOTAL SECURITY CLAMPDOWN, THAT SORT OF STUFF...
YEAH. I GUESS EVERYBODY SAW 'CLOSE ENCOUNTERS.' THEY EXPECT THAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT ACTION.
EXACTLY. 'NATIONAL SECURITY' IS ONE OF THOSE MAGICAL LITTLE PHRASES IT STOPS PEOPLE WORRYING ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING, WHERE YOU'RE GOING...
... WHO YOU'RE KILLING.
EVERYBODY WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH ABOUT SUNDERLAND AND THE D.D.I. IS CONVENIENTLY GATHERED IN ONE SMALL AREA. WE GO IN. THEY GET KILLED. EASY AS THAT.
SUNDERLAND IS LIKE A DEATH MACHINE, DWIGHT. IT'S SLEEK AND CO-ORDINATED AND EFFICIENT. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS POINT IT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION...
4


KDIK
...AND SET IT IN MOTION.
"I WATCHED MY MEN LOADING THE TRUCKS AND 'COPTERS THIS MORNING. THEY HAD GUNS AND SEARCHLIGHTS AND FLAME-THROWERS. I STILL FEEL PROUD WHEN I WATCH THINGS LIKE THAT.
KDIK!
"I THOUGHT ABOUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE... HOLLAND, BARCLAY, AND THE OTHERS. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S COMMING, DO THEY? THEY REALLY DON'T KNOW.
KDIK!
"THEY'RE COOLING OFF AFTER A BATTLE, THEY THINK THEY'VE WON. THEY THINK THEY CAN RELAX...
"THEY THINK THEY'RE SAFE."
KIRRIDIDIK!
THEY'RE IN FOR A RUDE AWAKENING, DWIGHT...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

"...A VERY RUDE AWAKENING INDEED."
HER NAME IS LIZABETH TREMAYNE, AND SHE'S USED TO TAKING HER SUNLIGHT A LITTLE MORE DILUTED.
STRUGGLING AWAKE, UNSTICKING HERSELF FROM THE HOT VINYL OF THE SEAT-COVERING, SHE STARTS TO REMEMBER...
SHE REMEMBERS THE VAN BREAKING DOWN. IT HAD BEEN LATE, IT HAD BEEN TOO FAR TO WALK, THERE HAD BEEN JUST HER...
...AND DENNIS.
SHE HOPES DENNIS IS GOING TO BE OKAY ABOUT THIS.
SHE HOPES DENNIS IS GOING TO MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PROPORTION. BECAUSE OTHERWISE...
...OTHERWISE IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG WALK HOME.
...AND, LIKE, MY MOM HAS THIS PLACE DOWN IF FLORIDA. YOU'LL *LIKE* IT THERE, LIZ. WE CAN GET SOME SUN, MAYBE DRIVE OUT SOME OF THE *SHADOWS* THAT HAVE GOTTEN INTO OUR LIVES.
WE CAN BE NORMAL PEOPLE AGAIN. I MEAN, SURE, I'M NOT FORGETTING ABOUT *ALEC*, BUT... WELL, HELL, LIZ. WE'VE GOT *EACH OTHER* NOW. WE NEED SOME TIME ON OUR OWN.
DENNIS...

DENNIS, LOOK, THIS IS ALL MY FAULT. I SHOULDN'T HAVE... WELL, LOOK, IT'S JUST...
...IT'S JUST YOU KEEP SAYING "ME", DENNIS. YOU KEEP SAYING "US"...
...AND I DON'T SEE IT LIKE THAT.
I MEAN, LAST NIGHT, IT WAS... WELL, IT WAS LIKE TIME OUT, Y'KNOW? IT WAS... WELL, JUST SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED. IT HAPPENED ONCE AND THAT'S IT.
...BUT YOU CAN'T BUILD A FUTURE AROUND THAT.
ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON IS THE HORROR IN OUR LIVES, DENNIS. THAT'S ALL. THAT'S WHAT HOLDS US TOGETHER.
IF WE WERE LIVING OUT IN... OH, I DON'T KNOW, MIAMI COUNTY OR SOMEWHERE, WE'D BE RIPPING EACH OTHER'S THROATS OUT WITHIN A MONTH.
I MEAN, YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?
...DON'T YOU?
DENNIS?
DENNIS, WHERE ARE YOU...?
HEY! LOOK, PLEASE... LET ME EXPLAIN!
DENNIS, YOU DIDN'T LET ME EXPLAIN!
IN SILENCE, HE WALKS AWAY. IN SILENCE, SHE STARES AFTER HIM. A BIRD SINGS BRIEFLY AND THEN STOPS, EMBARRASSED. FAR ABOVE, A HELICOPTER DRONES THROUGH THE STILL MORNING...
...AND THEN ANOTHER.
AND THEN ANOTHER.

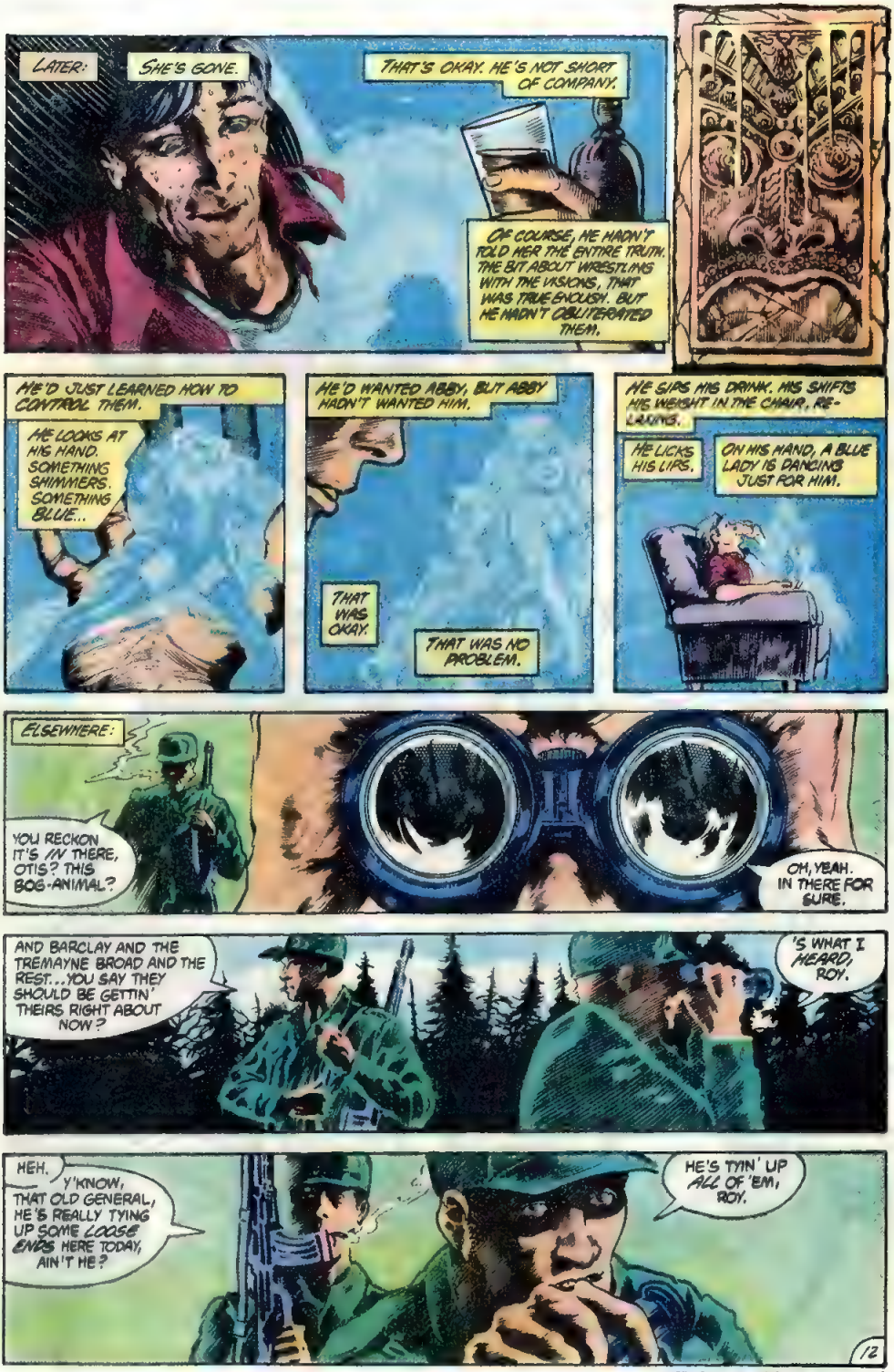
ELSEWHERE:
I MADE MY WAY BACK HERE... TO THE MOON. NO SIGN... OF DENNIS OR LIZ YET. IT DOESN'T MATTER.
MOTEL
I DON'T HAVE... ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO.
ARCANE... ARCANE...
MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT.
MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT... JUST TO DIE LIKE THAT.
IT'S A... NEW WORLD, ARCANE. IT'S FULL OF... SHOPPING MALLS AND STRIPLIGHTS AND SOFTWARE. THE DARK CORNERS ARE BEING PUSHED BACK... A LITTLE MORE EVERY DAY.
WE'RE THINGS OF THE SHADOW, YOU AND I... AND THERE ISN'T AS MUCH SHADOW... AS THERE USED TO BE.
PERHAPS THERE WAS ONCE A WORLD... WE COULD HAVE BELONGED TO... MAYBE SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE... BACK IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, THE WORLD WAS... FULL OF SHADOWS THEN... FULL OF MONSTERS...
NOT ANY MORE.
THINGS LIKE US... CAN'T SURVIVE IN THE LIGHT, ARCANE. PERHAPS YOU REALIZED THAT... RIGHT AT THE END.
MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT... MAYBE WE'RE BETTER DEAD.
MAYBE THE WORLD HAS RUN OUT OF ROOM... FOR MONSTERS..."

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

"...OR MAYBE... THEY'RE JUST GETTING HARDER TO RECOGNIZE."
MIGHTY MOO
...GET THIS STRAIGHT. A MONSTER, IS THAT WHAT Y'R SAYING? FROM A YOU-ROE?
S'RIGHT. BIG GREEN FELLA COVERED IN THIS AWFUL SLIME AN' JUNK AN' STUFF. WE FOUND ITS SHIP UP BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS.
BUT DON'T YOU WORRY, POP. WE GOT THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. THAT THING AIN'T GONNA GET VERY FAR.
AFTER ALL, THIS A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY.
OH.
OH YEAH. SURE.
SAY, YOU NEED A HAND WITH THOSE SEARCHLIGHTS, SON?
ELSEWHERE:
MATT?
HOW ABOUT A LITTLE LIGHT IN HERE, HUH?
ABBY?
ABBY... WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE DID YOU GO? I...
IT'S OKAY, MATT...
IT'S OKAY.
9

MIGHTY MOOSE
LATER:
...AND SO AFTER WE SAW THE SHIP CRASH, ALEC HEADED ON UP TO THE MOUNTAINS TO LOOK FOR WRECKAGE. HE DIDN'T SAY WHY.
MATT, HE... HE TOLD ME SOMETHING.
ABOUT YOU.
HE SAID HE THOUGHT YOU... THAT ALL THOSE MONSTERS AND HORRORS AND THINGS...
HE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE CAUSING THEM.
HE... HE WAS RIGHT, ABBY.
EVEN I DIDN'T KNOW IT UNTIL A WHILE AGO, BUT YEAH. ALEC WAS RIGHT.
BUT IT'S OVER NOW. I'VE BEATEN IT.
WHILE YOU WERE OUT, I...I'D BEEN DRINKING, ABBY. I'D BEEN DRINKING AND I HAD ONE OF MY...MY ATTACKS. IT WAS THE WORST YET.
ONLY THIS TIME I FOUGHT IT.
I FOUGHT IT, ABBY.
"THERE WERE THINGS WITH NO EYES AND THINGS LIKE DAMP, FURRY RUGS THAT GIGGLED WITH CHILDREN'S VOICES. THERE WERE THINGS I CAN'T TELL YOU ABOUT...
"...BUT I FOUGHT THEM.
"AND I WON. THEY JUST VANISHED! I FELT A GREAT, I DUNNO, A GREAT CALMNESS INSIDE ME. I KNEW THAT I'D BEATEN IT, THAT I'D RID MYSELF OF THIS... THIS ABILITY.
"THIS NIGHTMARE."
I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT CAME FROM, THE POWER... MAYBE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT ELECTROSHOCK THERAPY I GOT PUT THROUGH. IT DOESN'T MATTER.
IT'S GONE. THE CRAZINESS IS OVER. I'M OKAY.
WE'RE OKAY, ABBY.
10

LOOK... I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU, ABBY. I WANT TO TELL YOU JUST HOW MUCH, BUT I DON'T HAVE THE WORDS FOR IT.
I DON'T HAVE THE LANGUAGE.
WE USED TO BE ABLE TO TELL EACH OTHER THINGS LIKE THAT WITHOUT WORDS. I KNOW THE DRINK MESSED UP A LOT OF THAT, BUT... WELL, I'M THROUGH THAT NOW.
HEY, ABBY...
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
MATT...
MATT, I'M SORRY. I...
I'VE HAD TO LOCK A LOT OF THAT STUFF AWAY INSIDE MYSELF. I CAN'T JUST SWITCH IT BACK ON JUST LIKE THAT.
IT'S OKAY.
IT'S OKAY, ABBY. I UNDERSTAND. I CAN WAIT.
THANKS. I MEAN, REALLY. THANKS A LOT.
HEY, LOOK... I NEED TO TAKE THE AIR, OKAY? I NEED A WALK.
SURE, ABBY.
WHATEVER.


LATER:
SHE'S GONE.
THAT'S OKAY. HE'S NOT SHORT OF COMPANY.
OF COURSE, HE HADN'T TOLD HER THE ENTIRE TRUTH. THE BIT ABOUT WRESTLING WITH THE VISIONS, THAT WAS TRUE ENOUGH. BUT HE HADN'T OBLITERATED THEM.
HE'D JUST LEARNED HOW TO CONTROL THEM.
HE LOOKS AT HIS HAND. SOMETHING SHIMMERS. SOMETHING BLUE...
HE'D WANTED ABBY, BUT ABBY HADN'T WANTED HIM.
THAT WAS OKAY.
THAT WAS NO PROBLEM.
HE SIPS HIS DRINK. HIS SHIFTS HIS WEIGHT IN THE CHAIR, RELAXING.
HE LICKS HIS LIPS.
ON HIS HAND, A BLUE LADY IS DANCING JUST FOR HIM.
ELSEWHERE:
YOU RECKON IT'S IN THERE, OTIS? THIS BOG-ANIMAL?
OH, YEAH. IN THERE FOR SURE.
AND BARCLAY AND THE TREMAYNE BROAD AND THE REST...YOU SAY THEY SHOULD BE GETTIN' THEIRS RIGHT ABOUT NOW?
'S WHAT I HEARD, ROY.
HEH.
Y'KNOW, THAT OLD GENERAL, HE'S REALLY TYING UP SOME LOOSE ENDS HERE TODAY, AIN'T HE?
HE'S TYIN' UP ALL OF 'EM, ROY.
12
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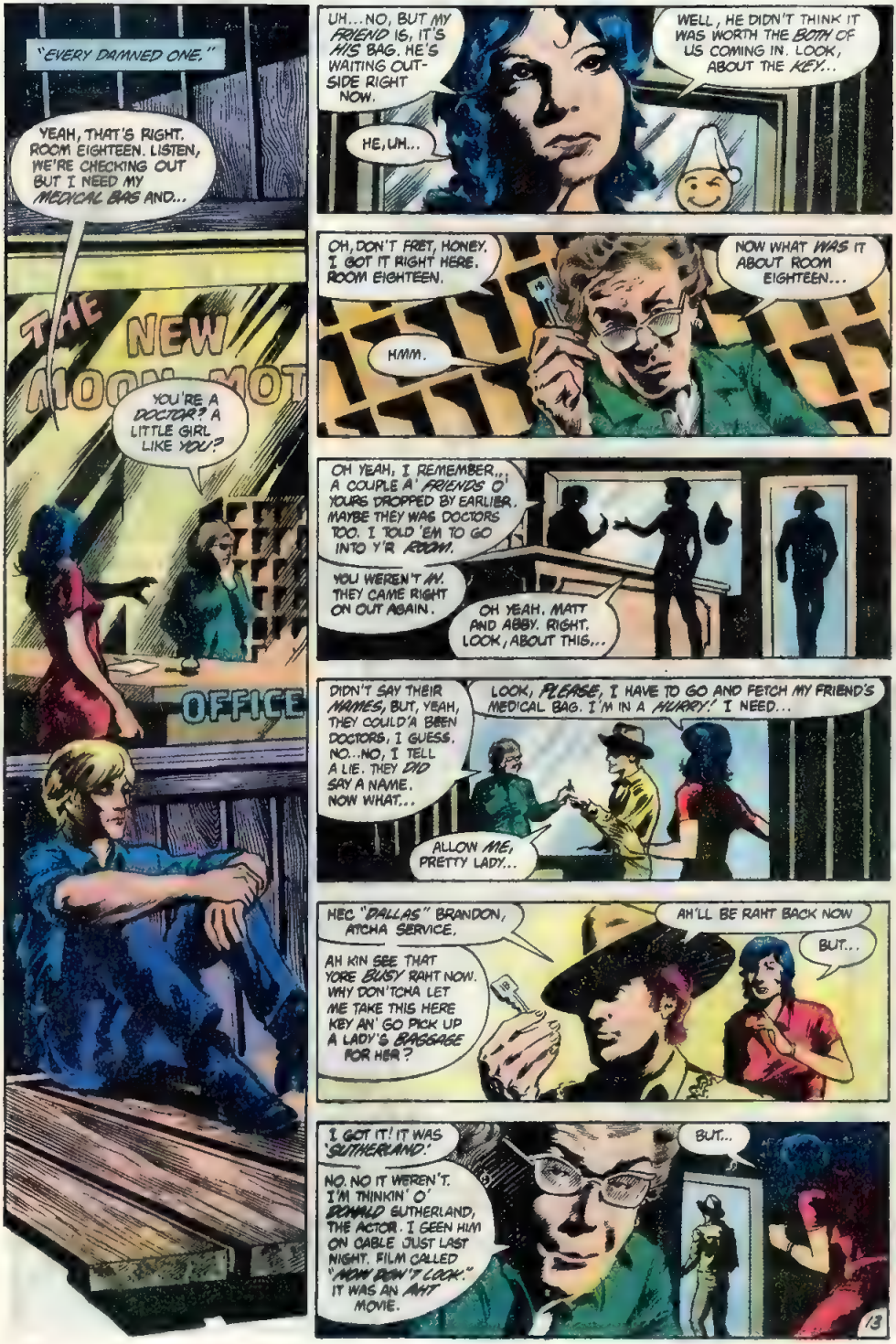
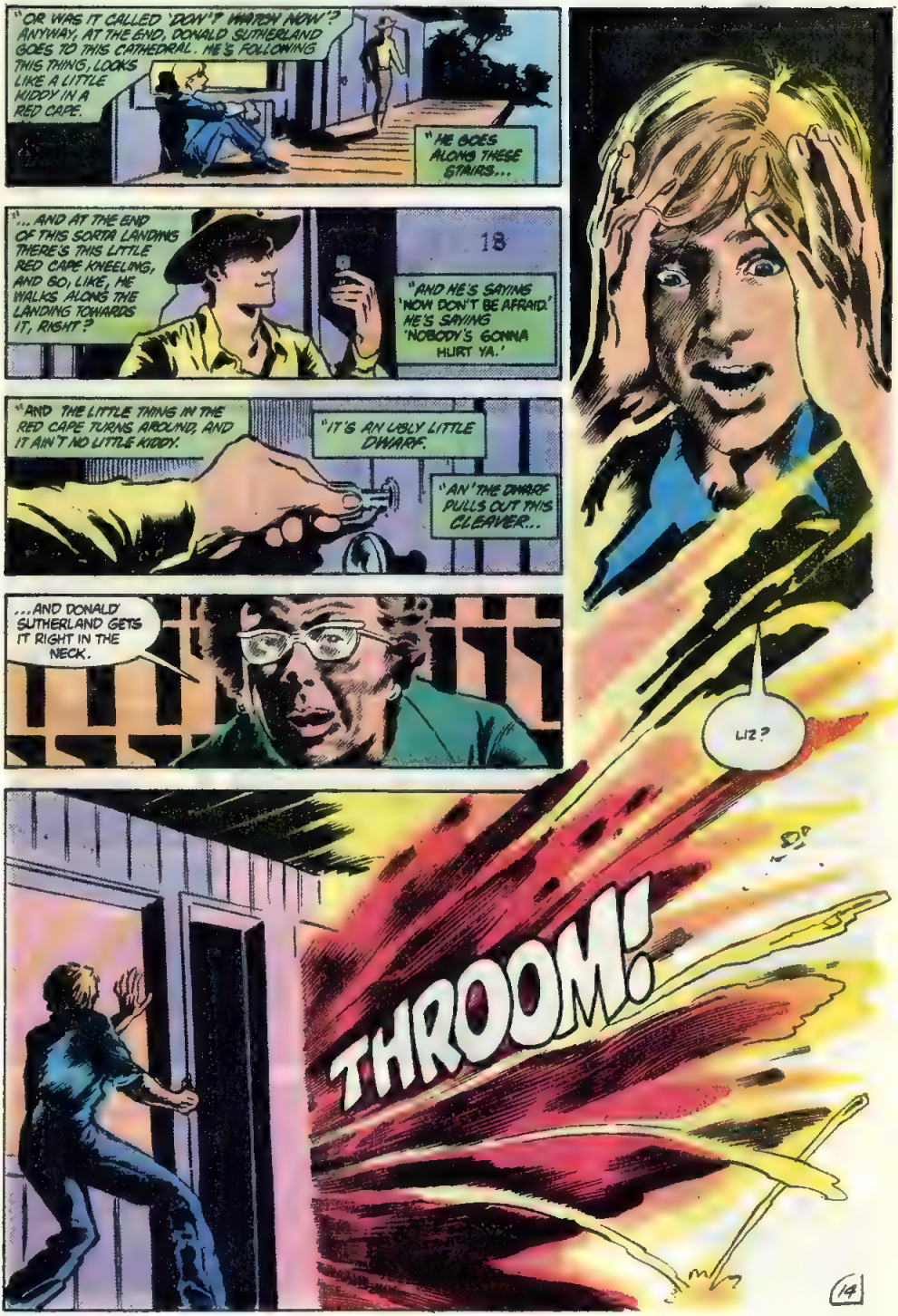

"EVERY DAMNED ONE."
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. ROOM EIGHTEEN. LISTEN, WE'RE CHECKING OUT BUT I NEED MY MEDICAL BAG AND...
THE NEW
YOU'RE A DOCTOR? A LITTLE GIRL LIKE YOU?
OFFICE
UH...NO, BUT MY FRIEND IS; IT'S HIS BAG. HE'S WAITING OUTSIDE RIGHT NOW.
HE, UH...
WELL, HE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS WORTH THE BOTH OF US COMING IN. LOOK, ABOUT THE KEY...
OH, DON'T FRET, HONEY. I GOT IT RIGHT HERE. ROOM EIGHTEEN.
HMM.
NOW WHAT WAS IT ABOUT ROOM EIGHTEEN...
OH YEAH, I REMEMBER,, A COUPLE A' FRIENDS O' YOURS DROPPED BY EARLIER. MAYBE THEY WAS DOCTORS TOO. I TOLD 'EM TO GO INTO Y'R ROOM.
YOU WEREN'T IN. THEY CAME RIGHT ON OUT AGAIN.
OH YEAH. MATT AND ABBY. RIGHT. LOOK, ABOUT THIS...
DIDN'T SAY THEIR NAMES, BUT, YEAH, THEY COULD'A BEEN DOCTORS, I GUESS. NO...NO, I TELL A LIE. THEY DID SAY A NAME. NOW WHAT...
LOOK, PLEASE, I HAVE TO GO AND FETCH MY FRIEND'S MEDICAL BAG. I'M IN A HURRY! I NEED...
ALLOW ME, PRETTY LADY...
HEC "DALLAS" BRANDON, ATCHA SERVICE.
AH KIN SEE THAT YORE BUSY RAHT NOW. WHY DON'TCHA LET ME TAKE THIS HERE KEY AN' GO PICK UP A LADY'S BAGGAGE FOR HER?
AH'LL BE RAHT BACK NOW
BUT...
I GOT IT! IT WAS 'SUTHERLAND.'
NO. NO IT WEREN'T. I'M THINKIN' O' DONALD SUTHERLAND, THE ACTOR. I SEEN HIM ON CABLE JUST LAST NIGHT. FILM CALLED "NOW DON'T LOOK." IT WAS AN AHT MOVIE.
BUT...
13

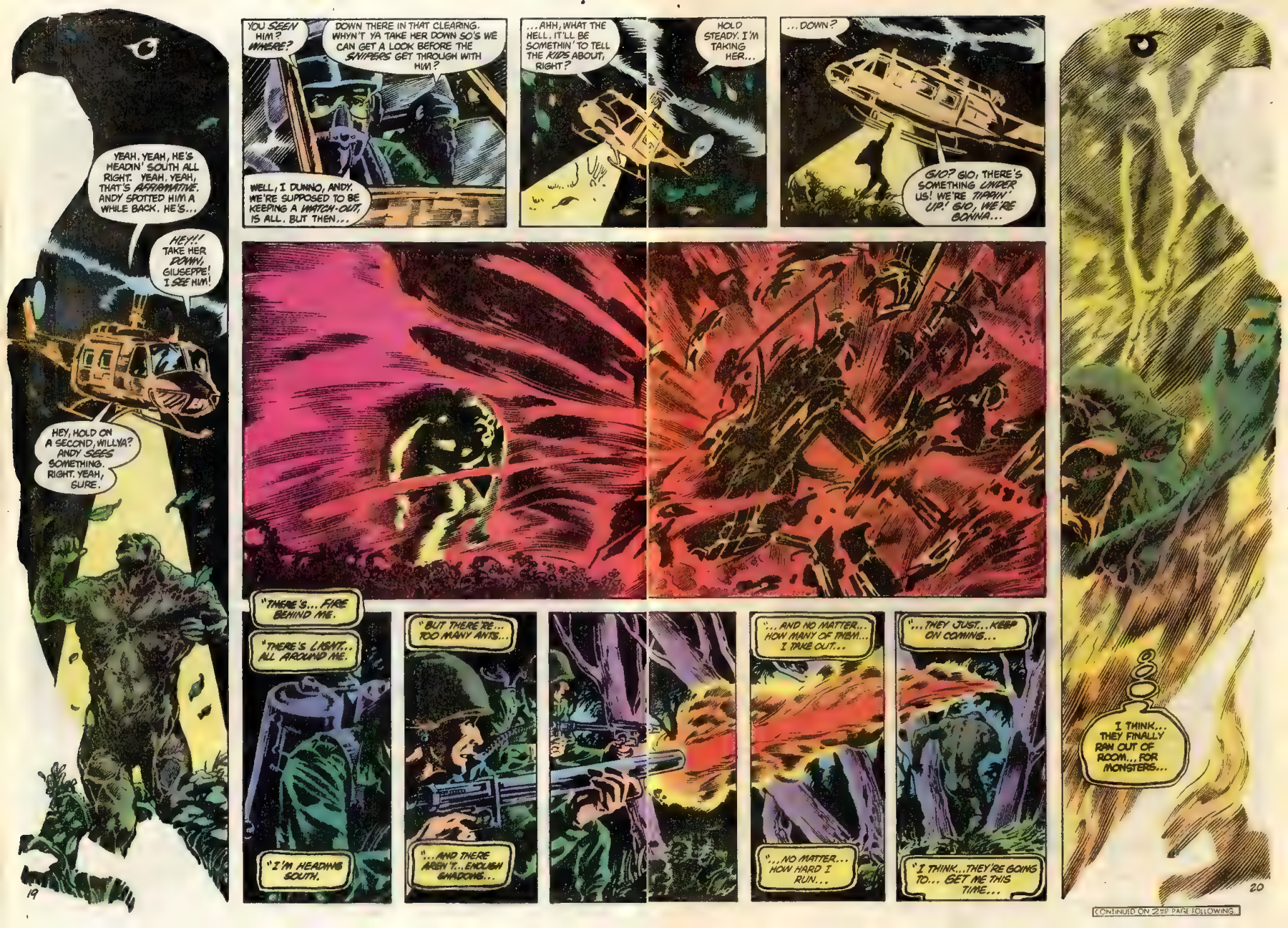

"OR WAS IT CALLED 'DON'T WATCH NOW'? ANYWAY, AT THE END, DONALD SUTHERLAND GOES TO THIS CATHEDRAL. HE'S FOLLOWING THIS THING, LOOKS LIKE A LITTLE KIDDY IN A RED CAPE.
"HE GOES ALONG THESE STAIRS...
"... AND AT THE END OF THIS SORTA LANDING THERE'S THIS LITTLE RED CAPE KNEELING, AND SO, LIKE, HE WALKS ALONG THE LANDING TOWARDS IT, RIGHT?
18
"AND HE'S SAYING 'NOW DON'T BE AFRAID.' HE'S SAYING 'NOBODY'S GONNA HURT YA.'
"AND THE LITTLE THING IN THE RED CAPE TURNS AROUND, AND IT AIN'T NO LITTLE KIDDY.
"IT'S AN UGLY LITTLE DWARF.
"AN' THE DWARF PULLS OUT THIS CLEAVER...
...AND DONALD SUTHERLAND GETS IT RIGHT IN THE NECK.
LIZ?
THROOM!

HE FINDS HER IN THE RECEPTION AREA. SHE'S TALKING ABOUT DWARVES. SHE'S TALKING ABOUT COWBOYS. HE'S HEARD THAT KIND OF TALK BEFORE, IN DANANG, IN PHNOM PENH...
AND ALL OF A SUDDEN HE ISN'T THINKING VIRGINIA ANY MORE. HE'S THINKING JUNGLE. HE'S THINKING NIGHT PATROL. HE'S THINKING INCOMING MAIL...
THE IDEA THAT THERE MIGHT BE A BACK-UP IN THE AREA OCCURS TO HIM ABOUT FIVE SECONDS BEFORE THE MEN IN SHINY SHOES COME PAST THE LOBBY WINDOWS.
"ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON IS THE HORROR IN OUR LIVES, DENNIS." THAT'S WHAT SHE'D SAID.
...BUT MAYBE HORROR WAS ALL IT TOOK. MAYBE THEY DIDN'T NEED ANYTHING ELSE TO MAKE IT WORK. MAYBE THINGS WOULD BE OKAY BETWEEN THEM...
...JUST SO LONG AS THEY NEVER RAN OUT OF HORRORS. SHE LEANS AGAINST HIM, SCARED, VULNERABLE, THE WAY A WOMAN SHOULD BE. AND DENNIS BARCLAY RUNS...
...AND DENNIS BARCLAY SMILES.
JEEZ, HENRY... WHAT KINDA CHARGE DID YA PUT IN THAT THING?
WELL, UH, Y'KNOW, JUST A LITTLE OVER THE USUAL. I, UH, WANTED TO MAKE SURE...
OH YEAH! YOU MADE SURE, ALL RIGHT. AW JEEZ, WILLYA LOOKIT THIS...
HENRY, HOW MANY BODIES DO WE HAVE HERE, EXACTLY? ONE OR TWO?
UH, WELL, TWO, I GUESS. WE DIDN'T SEE ANYBODY LEAVE. COULDN'T WE JUST COUNT HEADS OR SOMETHING?
GREAT IDEA, HENRY. YOU FIND 'EM...
15

"...AN' I'LL COUNT 'EM."
ZERO MINUS FIFTEEN.
ZERO MINUS TEN.
MINUS FIVE.
OKAY...
SWITCH 'EM ON.
HEY, THAT'S NICE. HALO OF LIGHT AROUND THE WHOLE WOODS. THAT'S REAL NICE.
NO PROBLEMS WITH THE FLAMETHROWERS? ANYBODY?
OKAY..NOW, WE'RE COMING AT THE WOODS NICE AND SLOW FROM THE NORTH. GONNA DO US A CLEAN SWEEP. EVERYBODY KNOWS THE SCORE, RIGHT? YEAH? WELL, ALL RIGHT...
"LET'S GET SOME!"
LIGHT...WHITE LIGHT... HARD AND SHARP... AND SUDDEN...
BUT WHERE FROM? AND WHY? IT ISN'T YOU.. DOING THIS, ARCANE. IT CAN'T BE YOU. YOU'RE DEAD.
I SAW THE BODY.
SO WHO IS IT OUT THERE? MAYBE IT'S NOBODY... MAYBE IT'S JUST... THE MODERN WORLD COMING... TO SLAP A CONDEMNATION ORDER...ON THE SHADOWS...
AREN'T THEY... GOING TO LEAVE ANY DARKNESS...FOR US, ARCANE?
ARE THEY..GOING TO...TAKE AWAY EVERYTHING?
16
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

"EVERYTHING THAT'S... DARK...
...AND PRIVATE...
"...AND SILENT."
'COPTER?
DUHDUHDUHDUHDUHDUHDUHDUH
ABBY? THAT YOU?
WHAT'S GOING ON? I THOUGHT I HEARD...
'COPTERS, MATT. LOTS OF COPTERS, OVER THE WOODS BY THE MOTEL...
AND ONE OF THEM'S COMING THIS WAY.
IT LOOKS AS IF IT'S GOING TO...
THAT...
THAT WAS OUR HOUSE.
THAT WAS WHERE WE LIVE!
YEAH.
"NOWHERE IS... SAFE ANY MORE."
17

NOWHERE.
NOT FOR... ANYBODY.
...NOT IN THE... WORLD OF NATURE.
THIS MORNING I WATCHED A BEETLE... THAT HAD GOTTEN ITSELF IN TROUBLE... WITH SOME ANTS.
FIRST THERE WAS THE BEETLE... THEN THERE WAS JUST... A BEETLE-SHAPED PILE OF ANTS.
THE BEETLE WAS BIGGER... AND STRONGER... AND MORE CLEVER...
HEY!!
BUT I GUESS THERE WERE JUST... TOO MANY ANTS.
THIS WAY! I SEEN HIM! THIS WAY!

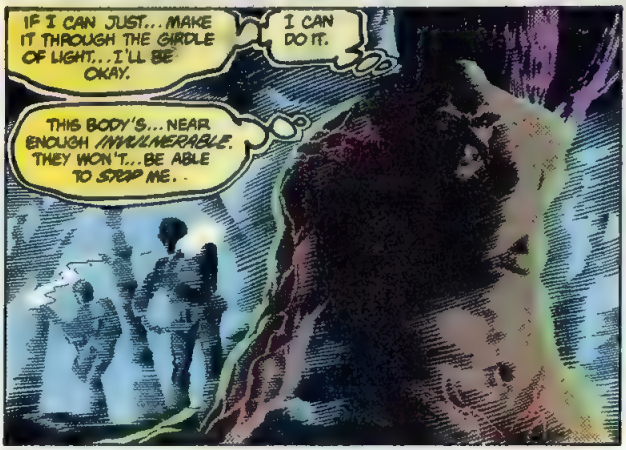

YEAH, YEAH, HE'S HEADIN' SOUTH ALL RIGHT. YEAH, YEAH, THAT'S AFFIRMATIVE. ANDY SPOTTED HIM A WHILE BACK. HE'S...
HEY!! TAKE HER DOWN, GIUSEPPE! I SEE HIM!
HEY, HOLD ON A SECOND, WILLYA? ANDY SEES SOMETHING. RIGHT. YEAH, SURE.
YOU SEEN HIM? WHERE?
DOWN THERE IN THAT CLEARING. WHYN'T YA TAKE HER DOWN SO'S WE CAN GET A LOOK BEFORE THE SNIPERS GET THROUGH WITH HIM?
WELL, I DUNNO, ANDY. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE KEEPING A WATCH-OUT, IS ALL. BUT THEN...
...AHH, WHAT THE HELL. IT'LL BE SOMETHIN' TO TELL THE KIDS ABOUT, RIGHT?
HOLD STEADY. I'M TAKING HER...
...DOWN?
GIO? GIO, THERE'S SOMETHING UNDER US! WE'RE TIPPIN' UP! GIO, WE'RE GONNA...
"THERE'S... FIRE BEHIND ME.
"THERE'S LIGHT... ALL AROUND ME.
"I'M HEADING SOUTH.
"BUT THERE'RE... TOO MANY ANTS...
"...AND THERE AREN'T...ENOUGH SHADOWS...
"...AND NO MATTER... HOW MANY OF THEM... I TAKE OUT...
"...NO MATTER... HOW HARD I RUN...
"...THEY JUST...KEEP ON COMING...
"I THINK...THEY'RE GOING TO... GET ME THIS TIME...
I THINK... THEY FINALLY RAN OUT OF ROOM... FOR MONSTERS...

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

...AND IT LOOKS LIKE... I JUST RAN OUT OF ROOM TOO.
THERE'S A BELT OF BLIND WHITENESS... AROUND THE WOOD...
AND BEYOND THAT... THERE'S SHADOWS.

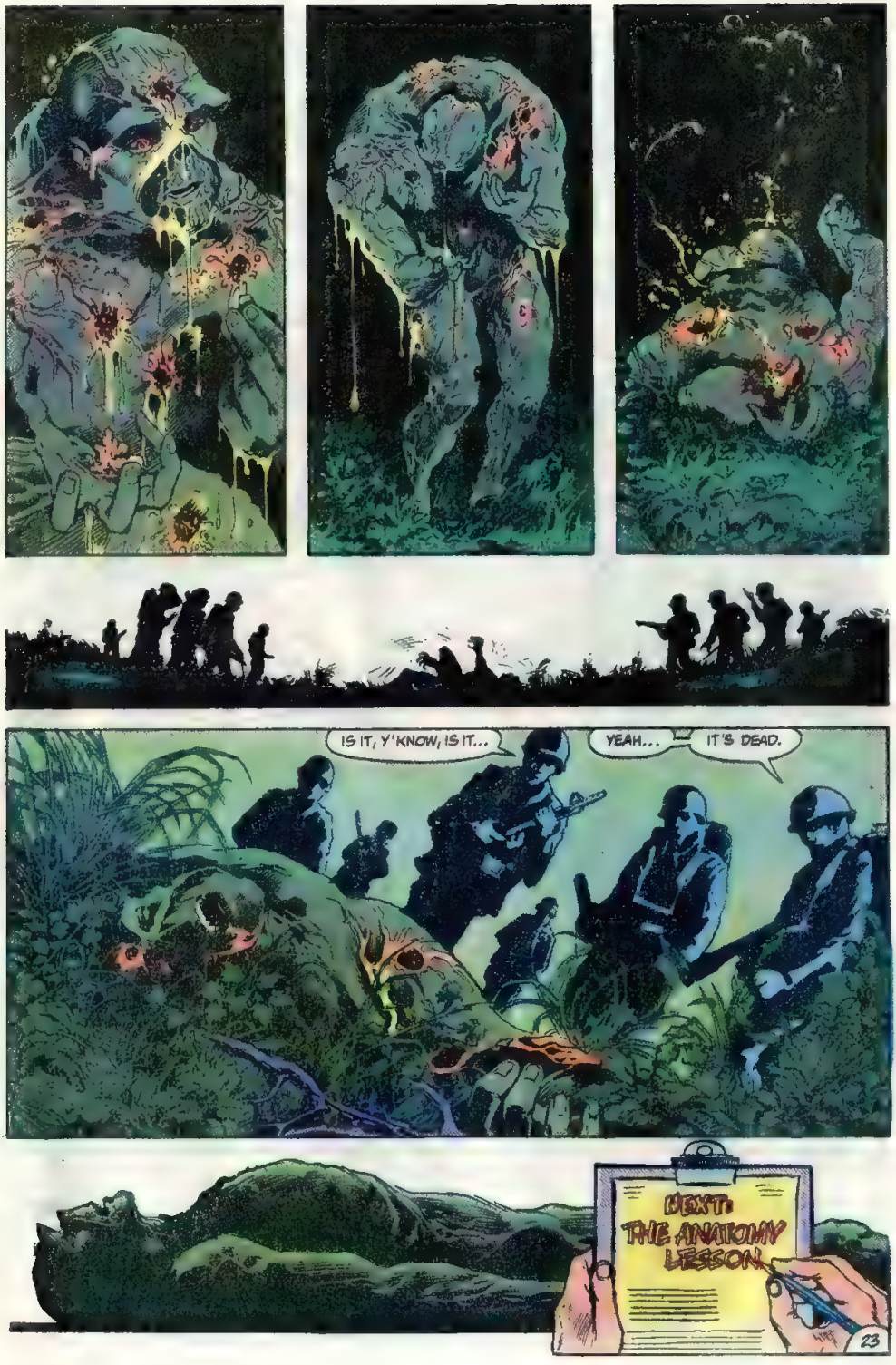
"I WONDER... WHAT'S IN THE SHADOWS?"

IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I CAN'T STAY HERE.


IF I CAN JUST... MAKE IT THROUGH THE GIRDLE OF LIGHT... I'LL BE OKAY.
I CAN DO IT.
THIS BODY'S... NEAR ENOUGH INVULNERABLE. THEY WON'T... BE ABLE TO STOP ME.

I'D BETTER RUN.

RUN FOR... THE SHADOWS.
KDIK
BUT THE SHADOWS...
KDIK
...ARE SO VERY FAR AWAY.
KRIDDIDIK


IS IT, Y'KNOW, IS IT...
YEAH...
IT'S DEAD.
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THE ANATOMY LESSON

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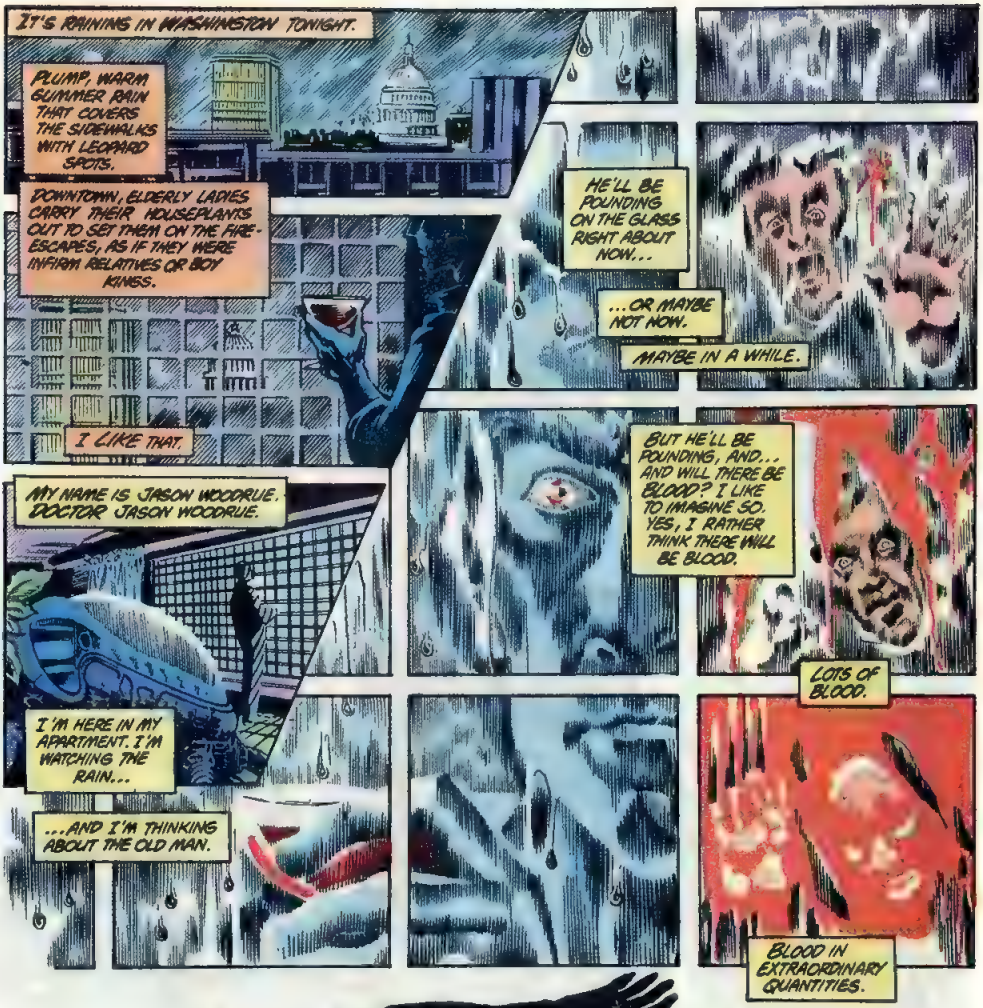
DON'T MISS
IT!


IT'S RAINING IN WASHINGTON TONIGHT.
PLUMP, WARM SUMMER RAIN THAT COVERS THE SIDEWALKS WITH LEOPARD SPOTS.
DOWNTOWN, ELDERLY LADIES CARRY THEIR HOUSEPLANTS OUT TO SET THEM ON THE FIRE-ESCAPES, AS IF THEY WERE INFIRM RELATIVES OR BOY KINGS.
I LIKE THAT.
HE'LL BE POUNDING ON THE GLASS RIGHT ABOUT NOW...
...OR MAYBE NOT NOW.
MAYBE IN A WHILE.
BUT HE'LL BE POUNDING, AND... AND WILL THERE BE BLOOD? I LIKE TO IMAGINE SO. YES, I RATHER THINK THERE WILL BE BLOOD.
LOTS OF BLOOD.
MY NAME IS JASON WOODRUE. DOCTOR JASON WOODRUE.
I'M HERE IN MY APARTMENT. I'M WATCHING THE RAIN...
...AND I'M THINKING ABOUT THE OLD MAN.
BLOOD IN EXTRAORDINARY QUANTITIES.

THE ANATOMY LESSON

ALAN MOORE: SCRIPT

TATJANA WOOD, COLORIST

JOHN COSTANZA: LETTERING

STEPHEN BISSETTE & JOHN TOTLEBEN: ARTISTS

LEN WEIN: EDITOR

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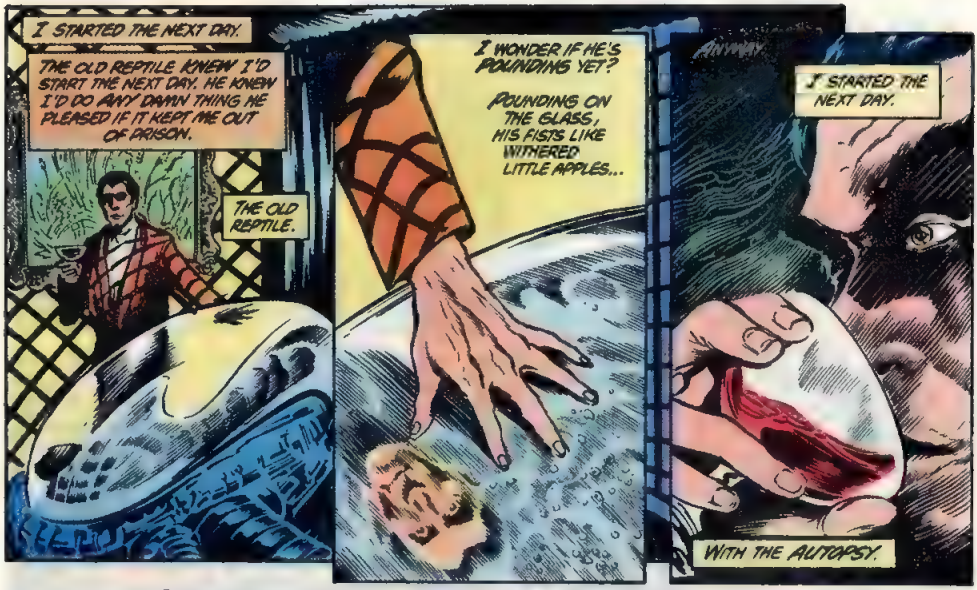
I REMEMBER THE OLD MAN SHOWING ME AROUND HIS BUILDING.
HE WAS SO PROUD OF IT. LIKE A CHILD WITH THE BIGGEST DOLLHOUSE IN THE WORLD.
OF COURSE THIS WAS AFTER HIS CORPORATION HAD SECURED MY RELEASE FROM JAIL.
WELL?
IT'S VERY... EMPTY.
I'D EXPECTED A HIGHER SECURITY PROFILE.
IT'S ALL ELECTRONIC, DR. WOODRUE. SILICONE SENTRIES WITH DIGITAL DOGS...
...AND I CONTROL EVERYTHING FROM A CONSOLE NO BIGGER THAN A CHECKERBOARD. SPARES ME A LOT OF GRIEF WITH LABOR RELATIONS.
FSSSS
THROUGH HERE...
HE'S IN HERE? HOW LONG HAS HE...?
ABOUT TWO WEEKS. HE'S BEEN HERE SINCE WE SHOT HIM.
WELL, DR. WOODRUE, DON'T BE AFRAID.
OPEN IT UP.

THERE...
...GRAY, BRITTLE, TATTOOED BY FROST, QUITE DEAD...
THIS WAS MY FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE...
SWAMP THING
CREATED BY: LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON
3

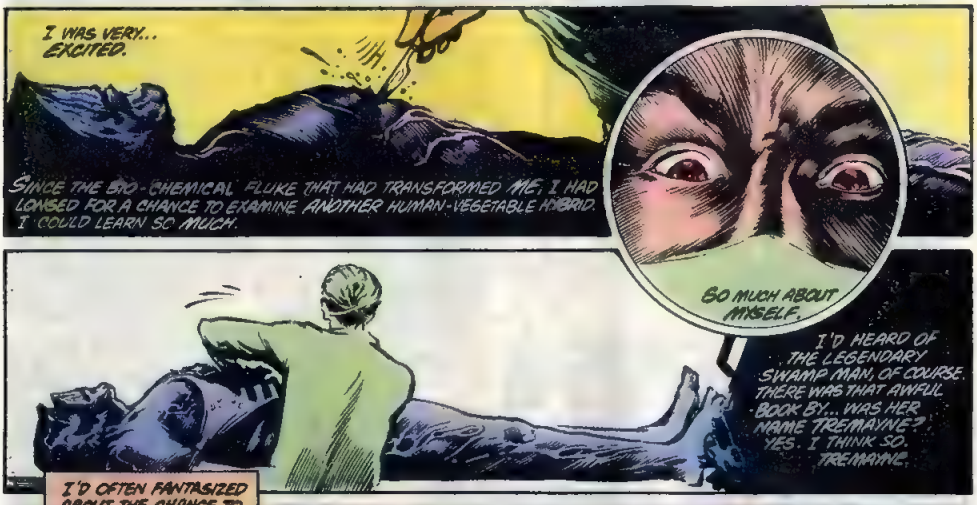
AND... THIS... WAS ONCE A HUMAN BEING?
HIS NAME WAS ALEC HOLLAND. HE WAS A DOCTOR, LIKE YOURSELF.
HE WAS DOING GOVERNMENT WORK, DEVELOPING SOMETHING CALLED A BIO-RESTORATIVE FORMULA, WHICH WAS INTENDED TO PROMOTE CROP GROWTH.
THE EXPERIMENT WAS SABOTAGED. THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION...
HOLLAND AND HIS CHEMICAL SOUP WENT INTO THE SWAMP WHERE THE PROJECT WAS LOCATED.
THIS IS WHAT CAME OUT.
YOU MENTIONED A LINDA HOLLAND...
HIS WIFE AND CO-WORKER. YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE... LIBERAL, EQUAL RELATIONSHIPS. CARING AND SHARING.
HIS WIFE WAS SHOT AND KILLED SHORTLY AFTER HOLLAND VANISHED IN THE EXPLOSION. SHE'S THE REASON YOU'RE HERE, WOODRUE.
"YOU SEE, WE GOT INTERESTED IN THIS FORMULA THAT HOLLAND HAD BEEN WORKING ON. WE HAD HER EXHUMED.
"IT MADE SENSE. AFTER ALL, APART FROM HER HUSBAND, SHE WAS THE ONLY HUMAN WHO'D BEEN EXPOSED TO THE FORMULA. SHE'D BEEN WORKING WITH THE STUFF FOR MONTHS...
"WE FIGURED IT MAY HAVE PERMEATED HER CELLULAR STRUCTURE, JUST THROUGH THE REPEATED SKIN CONTACT.
"SO WE DUG HER UP, AND WE HAD SOME PEOPLE POKE AROUND A LITTLE...
"KNOW WHAT WE FOUND?"
NOTHING.
4

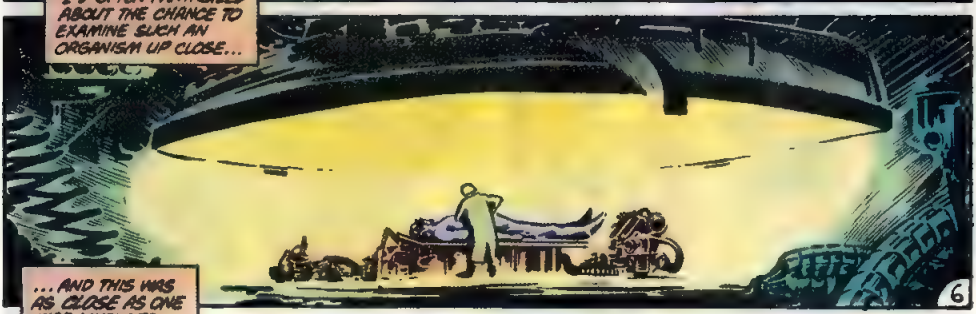
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

OH, THE FORMULA HAD COLLECTED IN HER BODY. IT JUST HADN'T DONE ANYTHING.
NO REASON WHY IT SHOULD, OF COURSE. THE FORMULA WASN'T DESIGNED TO AFFECT HUMAN TISSUE.
JUST PLANTS...
...EXCEPT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN OUR FRIEND IN THE CRYOCHEST, DOES IT?
WE'D ASSUMED THAT THE FORMULA HAD SOMEHOW TURNED HOLLAND INTO A PLANT. IF IT DOESN'T AFFECT HUMAN TISSUE, THAT IS PATENTLY IMPOSSIBLE.
YOU BEGIN TO SEE WHY WE ARRANGED YOUR RELEASE FROM JAIL, DR. WOODRUE?
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
SKLUNK
...I BELIEVE IT'S TIME THAT I SAW YOUR CREDENTIALS.
THAT ISN'T YOUR SKIN IS IT? MY FILES SAY IT'S ARTIFICIAL. YOU CAN DISSOLVE IT.
YOUR FILES ARE VERY ACCURATE, GENERAL.
THERE.
SATISFIED?
PERFECTLY. YOU'RE WOODRUE.
YOU'RE THE FLORONIC MAN.
WHEN CAN YOU START?
5


I STARTED THE NEXT DAY.
THE OLD REPTILE KNEW I'D START THE NEXT DAY. HE KNEW I'D DO ANY DAMN THING HE PLEASED IF IT KEPT ME OUT OF PRISON.
THE OLD REPTILE.
I WONDER IF HE'S POUNDING YET?
POUNDING ON THE GLASS, HIS FISTS LIKE WITHERED LITTLE APPLES...
ANYWAY.
I STARTED THE NEXT DAY.
WITH THE AUTOPSY.

I REMEMBER CLEARLY THE MOMENT BEFORE I BEGAN TO CUT:


I WAS VERY... EXCITED.
SINCE THE BIO-CHEMICAL FLUKE THAT HAD TRANSFORMED ME, I HAD LONGED FOR A CHANCE TO EXAMINE ANOTHER HUMAN-VEGETABLE HYBRID. I COULD LEARN SO MUCH.
SO MUCH ABOUT MYSELF.
I'D HEARD OF THE LEGENDARY SWAMP MAN, OF COURSE. THERE WAS THAT AWFUL BOOK BY... WAS HER NAME TREMAYNE?
YES. I THINK SO. TREMAYNE.



I OPENED HIM UP. HE HAD THINGS INSIDE HIM.

THERE WERE TWO LARGE, POD-LIKE STRUCTURES WITHIN THE CHEST CAVITY...
WHAT ARE THEY? HIS LUNGS OR SOMETHING?
NO. THEY LOOK LIKE LUNGS...
...BUT HUMAN LUNGS HAVE TINY CAPILLARY TUBES THAT LET OXYGEN PASS THROUGH INTO THE BLOOD. THAT'S WHAT LUNGS ARE FOR.
THESE ARE VEGETABLE FIBER. VEGETABLE FIBERS ARE TOO COARSE TO ALLOW MOLECULES OF OXYGEN THROUGH IN THAT WAY. THESE THINGS SUCK AND BLOW...
...AND THEY DON'T DO ANYTHING ELSE. THEY DON'T WORK. THEY'RE NOT LUNGS.
I WONDER WHAT THEY ARE?
I WONDERED THE SAME THING ABOUT THE SPONGE LIKE VEGETABLE BRAIN THAT WE FOUND INSIDE THE LEATHERY SKULL.
EVEN WITHOUT THE BULLET HOLE, IT COULDN'T POSSIBLY WORK. IT HAD NO SYNAPSE GAPS.
I WONDERED ABOUT THE USELESS HEART.
I WONDERED ABOUT THE UNWORKABLE PSEUDO-KIDNEYS.
I WONDERED HOW LONG I COULD GO ON DRAWING BLANKS BEFORE THE OLD MAN SENT ME BACK TO JAIL.
I WONDERED.
7

THOSE WERE LONG WEEKS. LONG AND FRUITLESS.

I SAW A LOT MORE OF THE OLD MAN, MY DISTASTE RIPENING TOWARD LOATHING WITH EACH ENCOUNTER

IN THE EVENINGS, WHEN THE MINIMAL STAFF HAD GONE HOME, HE WOULD STROLL PROUDLY AROUND THAT HUGE AND EMPTY TOMB OF A BUILDING.

SOMETIMES HE'D INSIST THAT I ACCOMPANY HIM.

HE'D TALK ABOUT THE ELECTRONIC SECURITY, ABOUT HOW ALL THE DOORS WERE CONTROLLED FROM H'S OFFICE..

SOMETIMES HE'D TALK TO ME ABOUT MY CAREER PROSPECTS.

THE WORD "FREAK" WAS USED AT LEAST ONCE.

JAIL WAS MENTIONED.

AND I STOOD THERE.

AND I TOOK IT.

AND EVERY NIGHT I CAME BACK TO THESE SPECIAL APARTMENTS THAT HE'D RENTED FOR ME.

AND EVERY MORNING I SET TO WORK HAULING ORGANS THAT COULDN'T WORK OUT OF A BODY THAT HAD NEVER NEEDED THEM.

THE BIO-RESTORATIVE FORMULA HAD TURNED HOLLAND INTO A PLANT... EXCEPT THAT IT COULDN'T HAVE. IT DIDN'T WORK ON HUMAN TISSUE.

THE SWAMP THING HAD ORGANS LIKE THOSE OF ANY LIVING CREATURE...

...EXCEPT THAT THEY DID NOT, COULD NOT, AND HAD NOT BEEN DESIGNED TO FUNCTION.

IT WAS MORE THAN A HUMAN MIND COULD EVER BE EXPECTED TO UNRAVEL.

I HAD THE ANSWER WITHIN SIX WEEKS.

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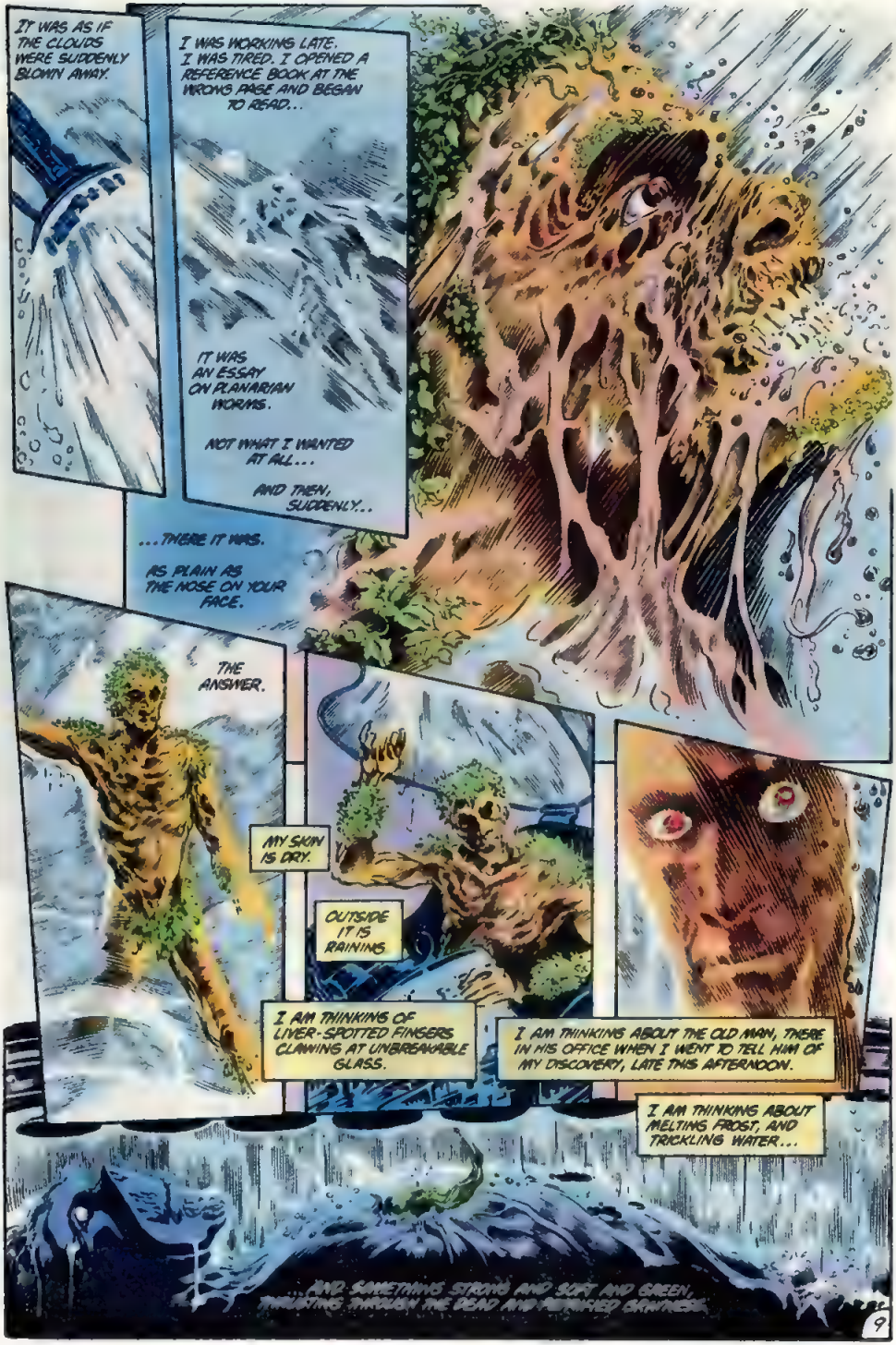
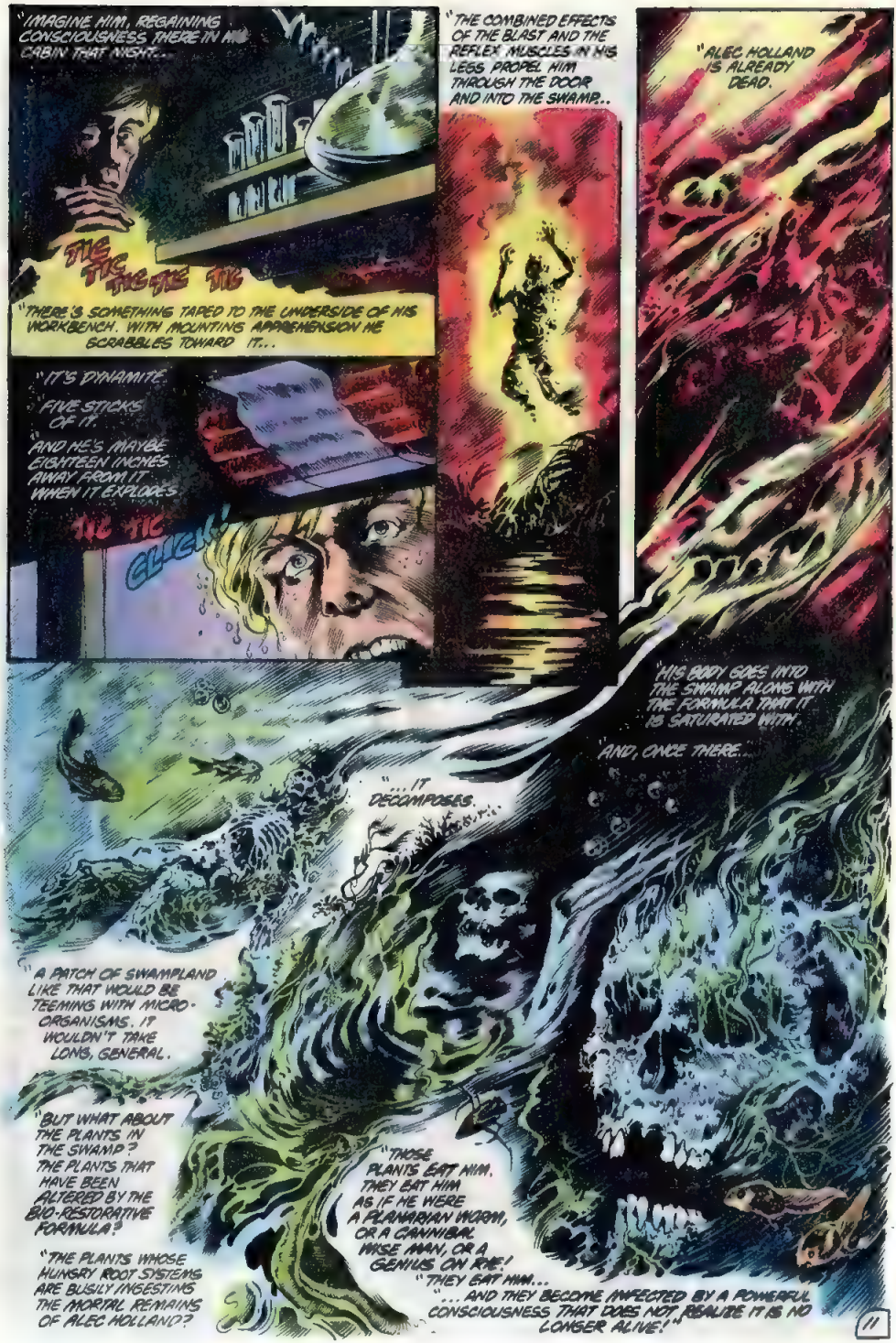
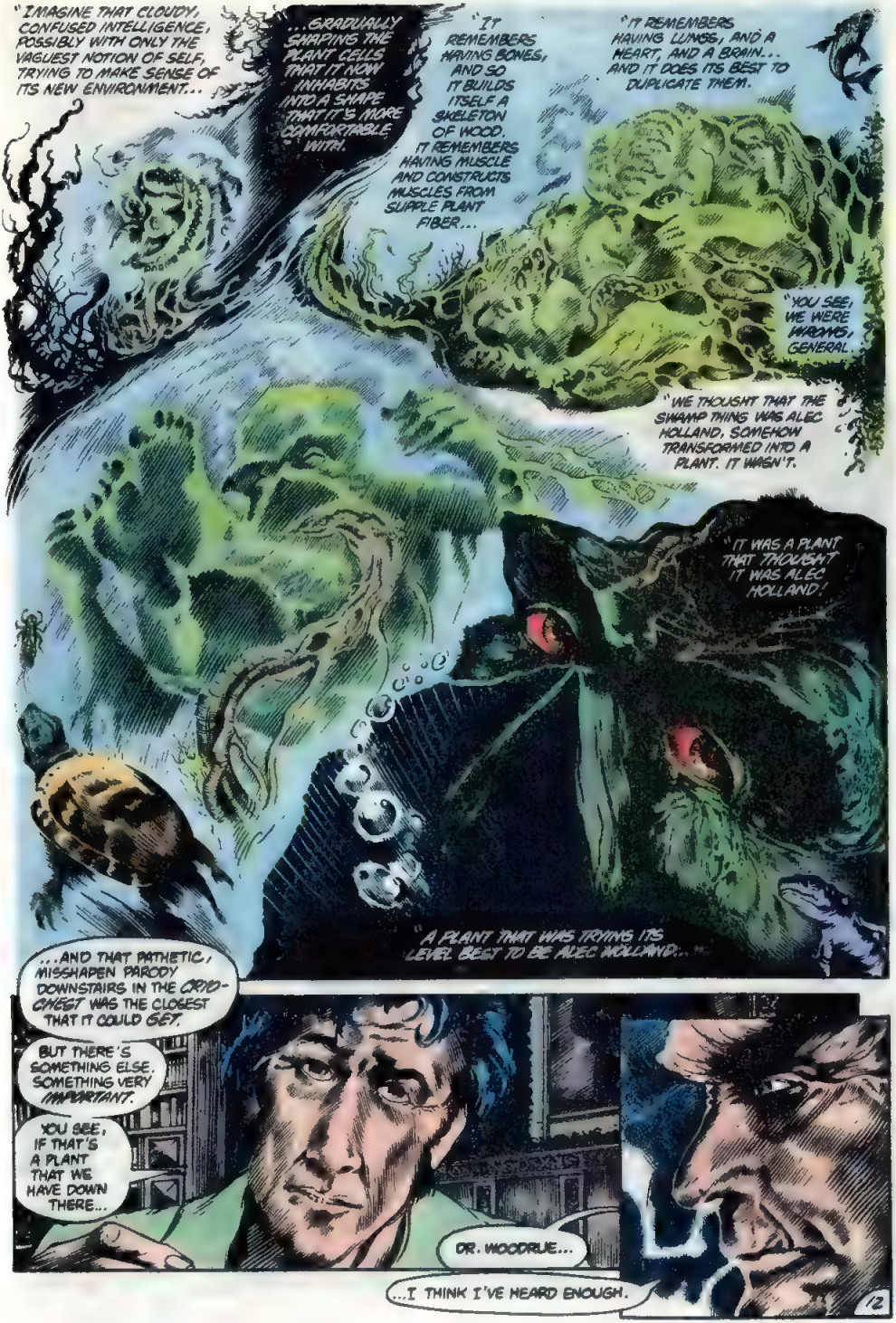
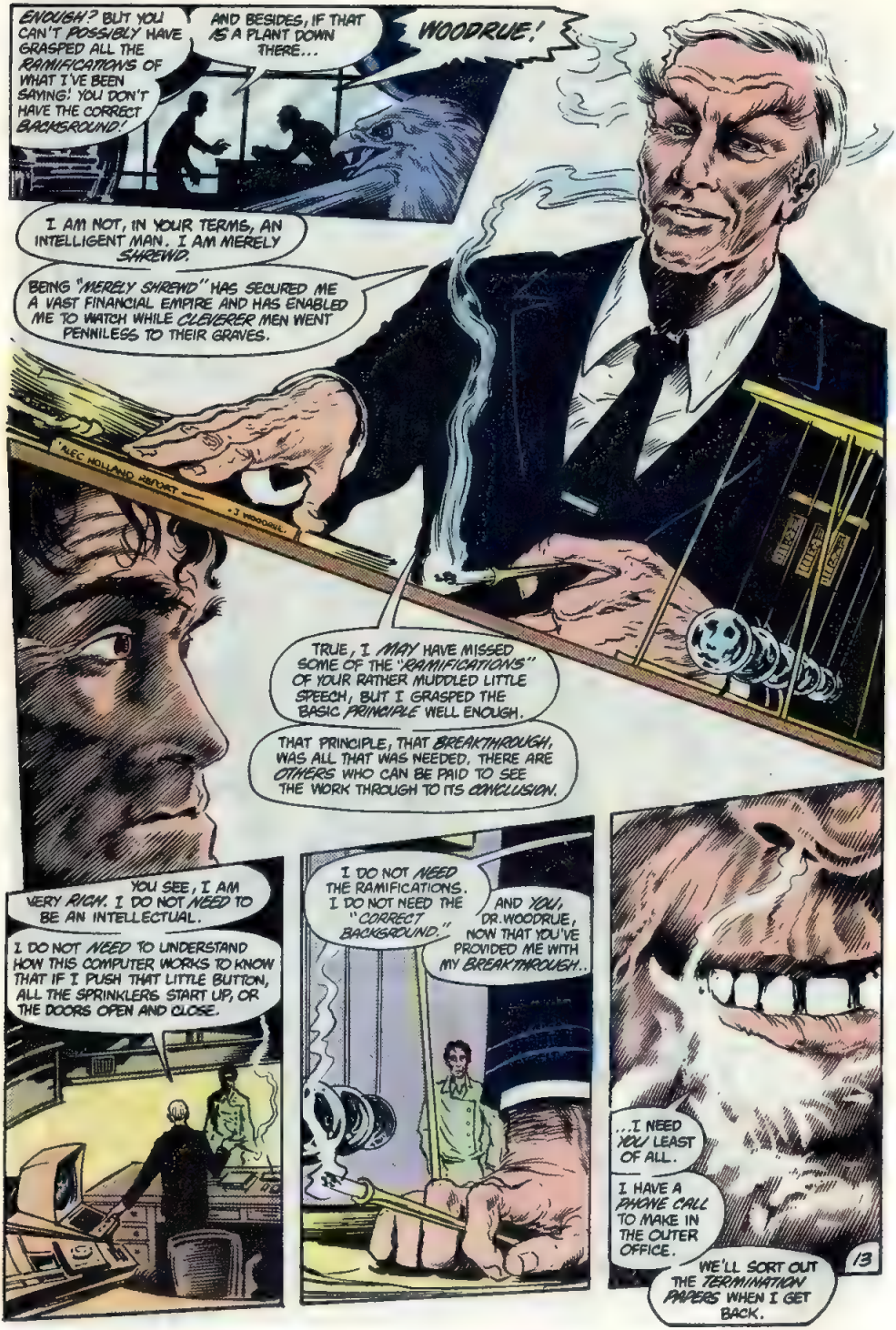

IT WAS AS IF THE CLOUDS WERE SUDDENLY BLOWN AWAY.
I WAS WORKING LATE. I WAS TIRED. I OPENED A REFERENCE BOOK AT THE WRONG PAGE AND BEGAN TO READ...
IT WAS AN ESSAY ON PLANARIAN WORMS.
NOT WHAT I WANTED AT ALL...
AND THEN, SUDDENLY...
...THERE IT WAS.
AS PLAIN AS THE NOSE ON YOUR FACE.
THE ANSWER.
MY SKIN IS DRY.
OUTSIDE IT IS RAINING
I AM THINKING OF LIVER-SPOTTED FINGERS CLAWING AT UNBREAKABLE GLASS.
I AM THINKING ABOUT THE OLD MAN, THERE IN HIS OFFICE WHEN I WENT TO TELL HIM OF MY DISCOVERY, LATE THIS AFTERNOON.
I AM THINKING ABOUT MELTING FROST, AND TRICKLING WATER...
...AND SOMETHING STRONG AND SOFT AND GREEN, PULSATING THROUGH THE DEAD AND ROTTED DARKNESS.

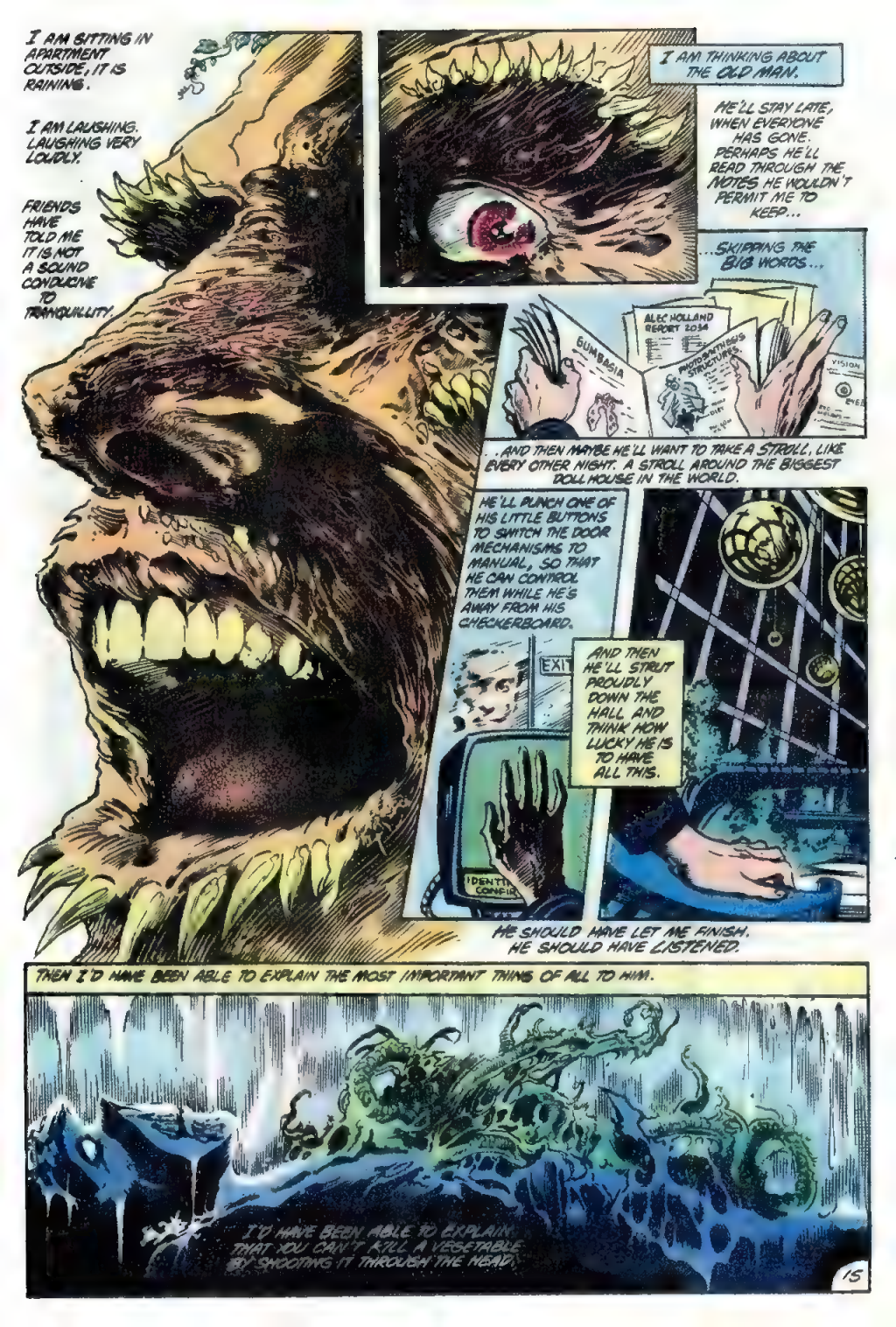
THE OLD MAN HAS NO ONE BUT HIMSELF TO BLAME. HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, EVEN WHEN I EXPLAINED IT TO HIM. HE DIDN'T LISTEN...
WELL, DR. WOODRUE? I'M LISTENING.
PLANARIAN WORMS, GENERAL!
THEY'RE THE KEY. THE KEY TO EVERYTHING!
OH MY GOD, IT'S SO OBVIOUS!
YOU SEE, A WHILE AGO, SOME PEOPLE DID AN EXPERIMENT. THEY TAUGHT A PLANARIAN WORM TO RUN A SIMPLE MAZE. THEY EDUCATED IT.
THEN THEY CHOPPED IT UP AND FED ITS REMAINS TO A BATCH OF PLANARIAN WORMS THAT COULDN'T RUN THE MAZE...
...EXCEPT THAT AFTER DIGESTING THEIR EDUCATED COMRADE, THE WORMS COULD RUN THE MAZE PERFECTLY!
DON'T YOU SEE, GENERAL? THE IMPLICATION IS THAT CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTELLIGENCE CAN BE PASSED ON AS FOODSTUFFS!
THAT MAYBE EXPLAINS THE CUSTOM AMONG CANNIBAL TRIBES OF EATING THE WISE MAN AFTER HIS DEATH IN ORDER TO RECEIVE HIS WISDOM.
GENERAL, YOU COULD GO INTO A DELICATESSEN AND ORDER EINSTEIN ON PUMPERNICKEL...
DOCTOR WOODRUE...
...I AM BECOMING ANGRY.
YOU TALK ABOUT WORMS, YOU TALK ABOUT CANNIBALS... NONE OF THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH HOLLAND.
NONE OF THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE JOB I'M PAYING YOU FOR.
ALL RIGHT, GENERAL.
ALL RIGHT.
LET'S TALK ABOUT HOLLAND. LET'S TALK ABOUT HIS ACCIDENT...
10


"IMAGINE HIM, REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS THERE IN HIS CABIN THAT NIGHT...
TIC TIC TIC TIC TIC
"THERE'S SOMETHING TAPED TO THE UNDERSIDE OF HIS WORKBENCH. WITH MOUNTING APPREHENSION HE SCRABBLES TOWARD IT...
"IT'S DYNAMITE.
"FIVE STICKS OF IT.
"AND HE'S MAYBE EIGHTEEN INCHES AWAY FROM IT WHEN IT EXPLODES.
TIC TIC
CLICK!
"THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF THE BLAST AND THE REFLEX MUSCLES IN HIS LEGS PROPEL HIM THROUGH THE DOOR AND INTO THE SWAMP...
"ALEC HOLLAND IS ALREADY DEAD.
"HIS BODY GOES INTO THE SWAMP ALONG WITH THE FORMULA THAT IT IS SATURATED WITH.
"AND, ONCE THERE...
"...IT DECOMPOSES.
"A PATCH OF SWAMPLAND LIKE THAT WOULD BE TEEMING WITH MICRO-ORGANISMS. IT WOULDN'T TAKE LONG, GENERAL.
"BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PLANTS IN THE SWAMP? THE PLANTS THAT HAVE BEEN ALTERED BY THE BIO-RESTORATIVE FORMULA?
"THOSE PLANTS EAT HIM. THEY EAT HIM AS IF HE WERE A PLANARIAN WORM, OR A CANNIBAL WISE MAN, OR A GENIUS ON RICE!
"THEY EAT HIM...
"...AND THEY BECOME INFECTED BY A POWERFUL CONSCIOUSNESS THAT DOES NOT REALIZE IT IS NO LONGER ALIVE!
"THE PLANTS WHOSE HUNGRY ROOT SYSTEMS ARE BUSILY INGESTING THE MORTAL REMAINS OF ALEC HOLLAND?
11

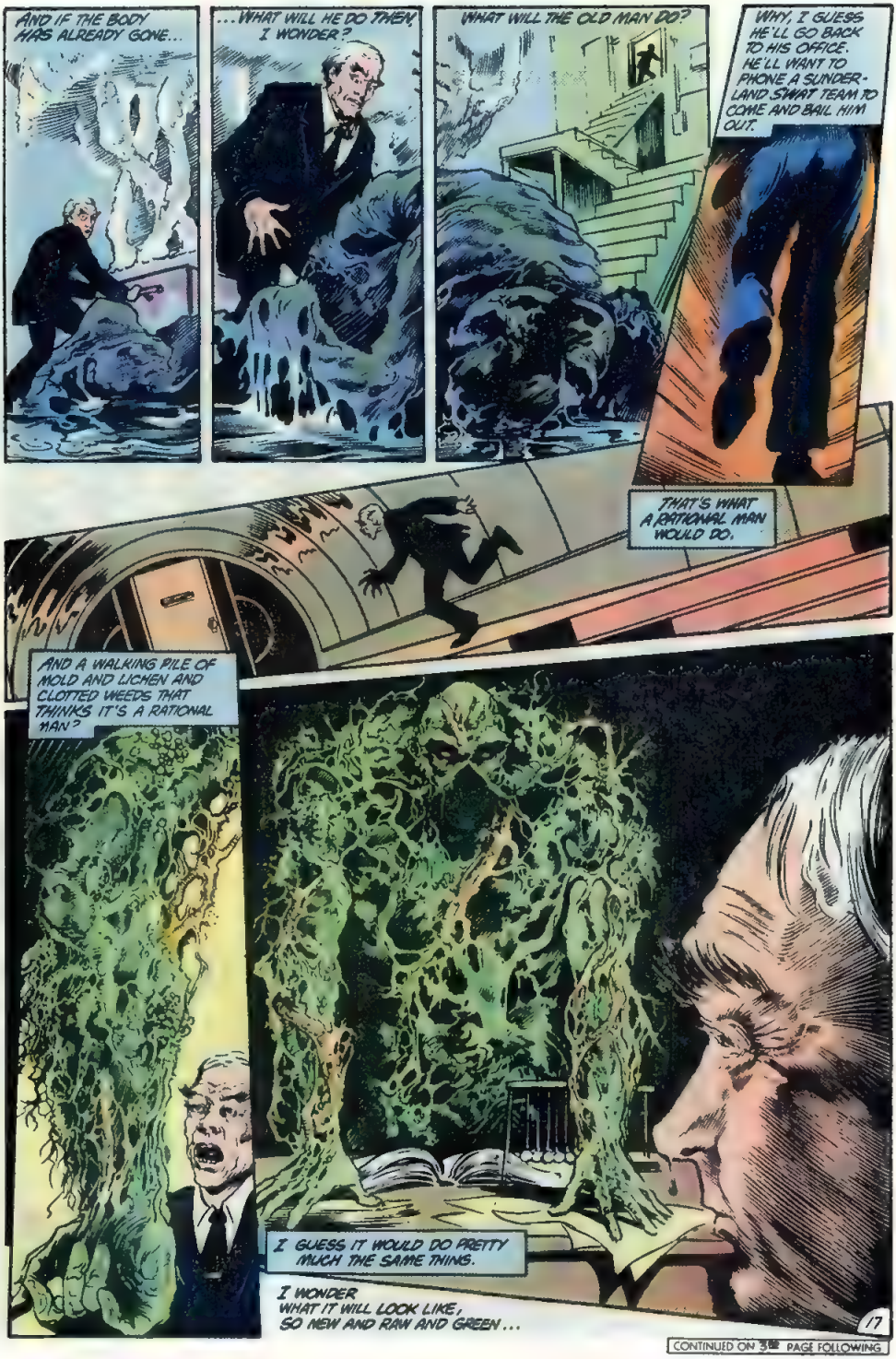

"IMAGINE THAT CLOUDY, CONFUSED INTELLIGENCE, POSSIBLY WITH ONLY THE VAGUEST NOTION OF SELF, TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF ITS NEW ENVIRONMENT...
...GRADUALLY SHAPING THE PLANT CELLS THAT IT NOW INHABITS INTO A SHAPE THAT IT'S MORE COMFORTABLE WITH.
"IT REMEMBERS HAVING BONES, AND SO IT BUILDS ITSELF A SKELETON OF WOOD. IT REMEMBERS HAVING MUSCLE AND CONSTRUCTS MUSCLES FROM SUPPLE PLANT FIBER...
"IT REMEMBERS HAVING LUNGS, AND A HEART, AND A BRAIN... AND IT DOES ITS BEST TO DUPLICATE THEM.
"YOU SEE, WE WERE WRONG, GENERAL.
"WE THOUGHT THAT THE SWAMP THING WAS ALEC HOLLAND, SOMEHOW TRANSFORMED INTO A PLANT. IT WASN'T.
"IT WAS A PLANT THAT THOUGHT IT WAS ALEC HOLLAND!
"A PLANT THAT WAS TRYING ITS LEVEL BEST TO BE ALEC HOLLAND...
...AND THAT PATHETIC, MISSHAPEN PARODY DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CROID-CHEST WAS THE CLOSEST THAT IT COULD GET.
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT.
YOU SEE, IF THAT'S A PLANT THAT WE HAVE DOWN THERE...
DR. WOODRUE...
...I THINK I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.
12


ENOUGH? BUT YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE GRASPED ALL THE RAMIFICATIONS OF WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING! YOU DON'T HAVE THE CORRECT BACKGROUND!
AND BESIDES, IF THAT IS A PLANT DOWN THERE...
WOODRUE!
I AM NOT, IN YOUR TERMS, AN INTELLIGENT MAN. I AM MERELY SHREWD.
BEING "MERELY SHREWD" HAS SECURED ME A VAST FINANCIAL EMPIRE AND HAS ENABLED ME TO WATCH WHILE CLEVERER MEN WENT PENNILESS TO THEIR GRAVES.
ALEC HOLLAND HISTORY
J WOODRUE
TRUE, I MAY HAVE MISSED SOME OF THE "RAMIFICATIONS" OF YOUR RATHER MUDDLED LITTLE SPEECH, BUT I GRASPED THE BASIC PRINCIPLE WELL ENOUGH.
THAT PRINCIPLE, THAT BREAKTHROUGH, WAS ALL THAT WAS NEEDED. THERE ARE OTHERS WHO CAN BE PAID TO SEE THE WORK THROUGH TO ITS CONCLUSION.
YOU SEE, I AM VERY RICH. I DO NOT NEED TO BE AN INTELLECTUAL.
I DO NOT NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW THIS COMPUTER WORKS TO KNOW THAT IF I PUSH THAT LITTLE BUTTON, ALL THE SPRINKLERS START UP, OR THE DOORS OPEN AND CLOSE.
I DO NOT NEED THE RAMIFICATIONS. I DO NOT NEED THE "CORRECT BACKGROUND."
AND YOU, DR. WOODRUE, NOW THAT YOU'VE PROVIDED ME WITH MY BREAKTHROUGH..
...I NEED YOU LEAST OF ALL.
I HAVE A PHONE CALL TO MAKE IN THE OUTER OFFICE.
WE'LL SORT OUT THE TERMINATION PAPERS WHEN I GET BACK.
13

...AND THAT'S HOW THE OLD MAN FIRED ME.
JUST LIKE THAT.
...AND THEN HE SAUNTERED OUT OF HIS OFFICE: A SELF-MADE MAN...A COMMON MAN, BY GOD... WHO'D JUST PUT ONE OVER ON AN UPPITY INTELLECTUAL.
HE WAS CHUCKLING TO HIMSELF.
SO WAS I.
HE'D LEFT ME ALONE WITH HIS COMPUTER...
...AND I UNDERSTOOD EXACTLY HOW IT WORKED.
SUNDERLAND HADN'T BEEN BRAGGING.
FROM THAT CONSOLE, YOU CONTROLLED THE WHOLE BUILDING.
YOU CONTROLLED THE ELEVATORS, THE LIGHTS, THE SWITCHBOARD.
...AND THE THERMOSTATS IN THE FREEZER UNITS...
...AND
THE DOORS.
14


I AM SITTING IN APARTMENT OUTSIDE, IT IS RAINING.
I AM LAUGHING. LAUGHING VERY LOUDLY.
FRIENDS HAVE TOLD ME IT IS NOT A SOUND CONDUCIVE TO TRANQUILLITY.
I AM THINKING ABOUT THE OLD MAN.
HE'LL STAY LATE, WHEN EVERYONE HAS GONE. PERHAPS HE'LL READ THROUGH THE NOTES HE WOULDN'T PERMIT ME TO KEEP...
...SKIPPING THE BIG WORDS...
ALEC HOLLAND REPORT 2034
GUMBASIA
PHOTOSANTHESIS STRUCTURES
VISION
...AND THEN MAYBE HE'LL WANT TO TAKE A STROLL, LIKE EVERY OTHER NIGHT. A STROLL AROUND THE BIGGEST DOLL HOUSE IN THE WORLD.
HE'LL PUNCH ONE OF HIS LITTLE BUTTONS TO SWITCH THE DOOR MECHANISMS TO MANUAL, SO THAT HE CAN CONTROL THEM WHILE HE'S AWAY FROM HIS CHECKERBOARD.
EXIT
AND THEN HE'LL STRUT PROUDLY DOWN THE HALL AND THINK HOW LUCKY HE IS TO HAVE ALL THIS.
HE SHOULD HAVE LET ME FINISH. HE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED.
THEN I'D HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL TO HIM.
I'D HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN THAT YOU CAN'T KILL A VEGETABLE BY SHOOTING IT THROUGH THE HEAD.
15

OH, YOU COULD GIVE IT SUCH A SHOCK THAT IT WOULD PLUNGE INTO A CELLULAR COMA. YOU COULD KEEP IT IN THAT STATE BY PLACING IT IN A FREEZER UNIT...
...BUT YOU COULDN'T KILL IT.
HE JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE CORRECT BACKGROUND.
PERHAPS HE'LL BE IN TIME TO SEE IT... THE GRAY HUSK SPLINTERING AND TEARING. THE RAW, WET, IMPLACABLE GREENNESS BENEATH.
REALLY, THE OLD MAN COULD HAVE WORKED THAT OUT FOR HIMSELF.
CRYOGE
I WONDER WHAT HE'S DOING NOW?
I WONDER HOW LONG HE'LL BE ABLE TO RESIST GOING DOWN THERE AND TAKING A LOOK?
HOLLAND
HOLLAND
OR PERHAPS NOT.
16


AND IF THE BODY HAS ALREADY GONE...
...WHAT WILL HE DO THEN, I WONDER?
WHAT WILL THE OLD MAN DO?
WHY, I GUESS HE'LL GO BACK TO HIS OFFICE. HE'LL WANT TO PHONE A SUNDERLAND SWAT TEAM TO COME AND BAIL HIM OUT.
THAT'S WHAT A RATIONAL MAN WOULD DO.
AND A WALKING PILE OF MOLD AND LICHEN AND CLOTTED WEEDS THAT THINKS IT'S A RATIONAL MAN?
I GUESS IT WOULD DO PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING.
I WONDER WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE, SO NEW AND RAW AND GREEN...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

... AND I WONDER HOW MUCH IT WILL HAVE SEEN?
YOU...UH...
ARE YOU, UH, STILL..., INTELLIGENT?
CAN YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING?
UH... THE FILE ON YOU..
UH, LOOK, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE READ THAT FILE THERE, BUT...
YES... I... HAVE READ... THE FILE.
HOLLAND REPORT - J. WOODRUE
LIKE IT?

MMMMMMMMUURRAAAAAAGH

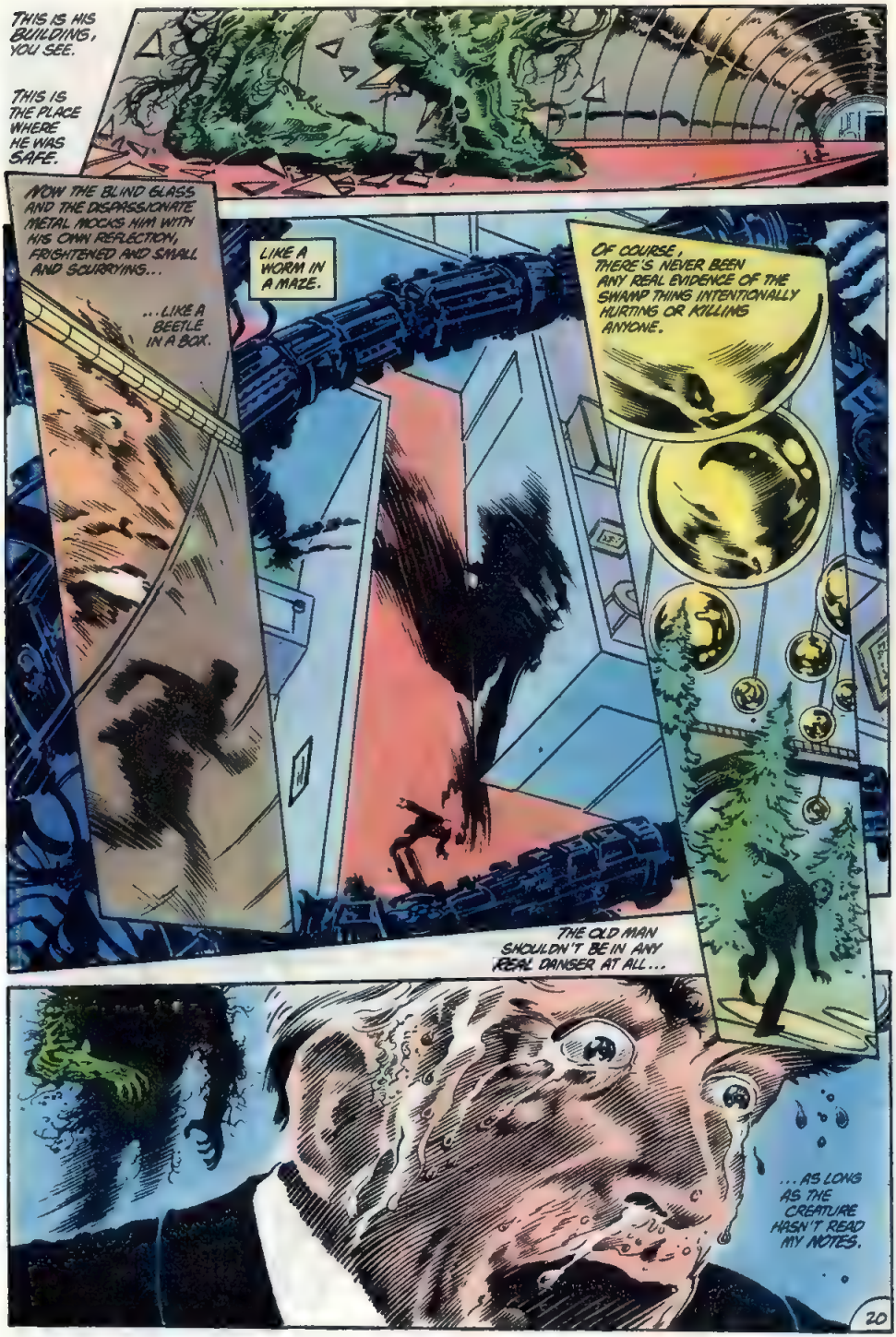
I AM THINKING ABOUT THE OLD MAN.

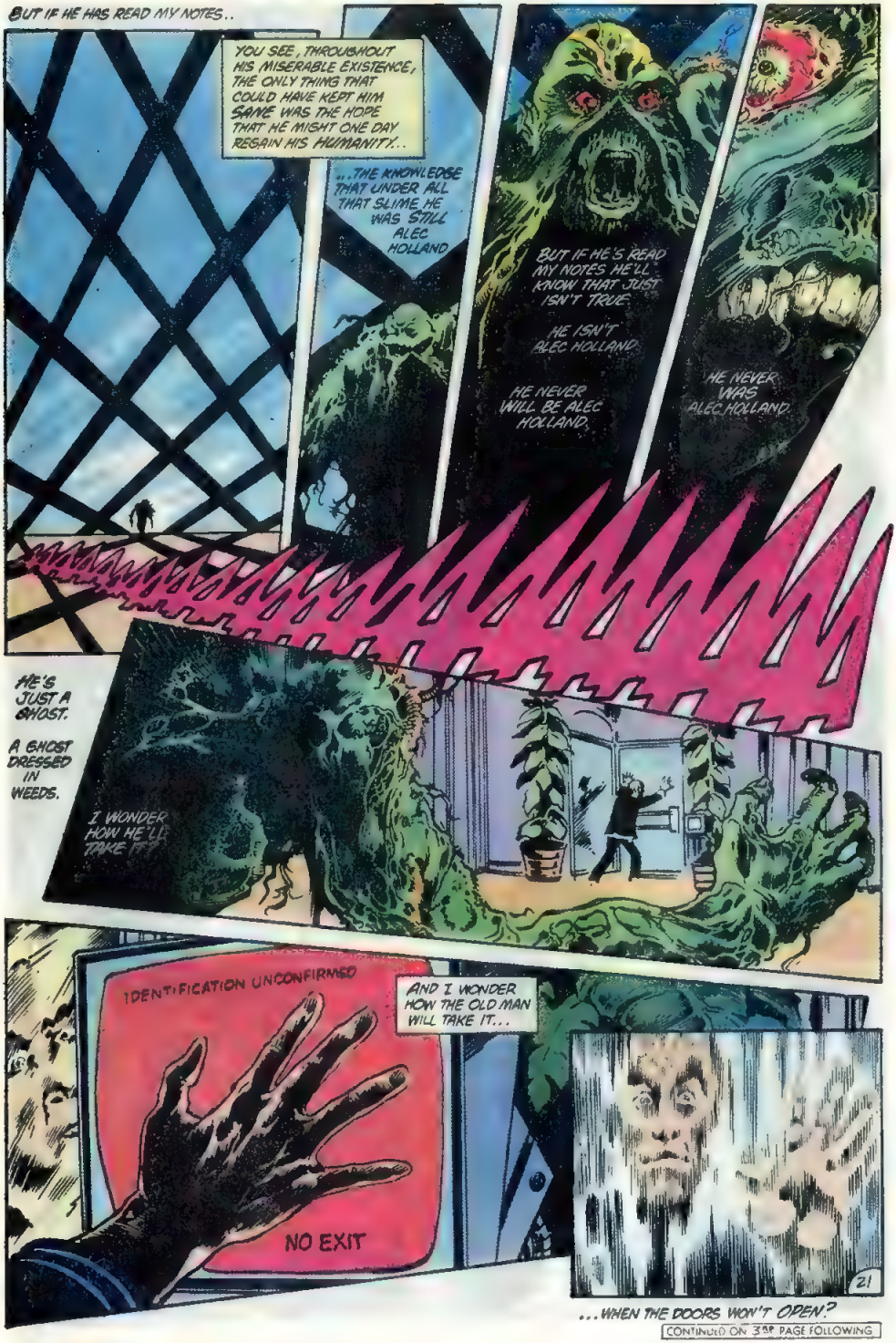
I AM THINKING ABOUT THE CRACKING OF HIS JOINTS AS HE RUNS.

PRIV
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

PRIVATE
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

I AM THINKING OF THE TERROR IN HIS ANCIENT, ATROPHIED HEART.


THIS IS HIS BUILDING, YOU SEE.
THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS SAFE.
NOW THE BLIND GLASS AND THE DISPASSIONATE METAL MOCKS HIM WITH HIS OWN REFLECTION, FRIGHTENED AND SMALL AND SCURRYING...
...LIKE A BEETLE IN A BOX.
LIKE A WORM IN A MAZE.
OF COURSE, THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANY REAL EVIDENCE OF THE SWAMP THING INTENTIONALLY HURTING OR KILLING ANYONE.
THE OLD MAN SHOULDN'T BE IN ANY REAL DANGER AT ALL...
...AS LONG AS THE CREATURE HASN'T READ MY NOTES.


BUT IF HE HAS READ MY NOTES..
YOU SEE, THROUGHOUT HIS MISERABLE EXISTENCE, THE ONLY THING THAT COULD HAVE KEPT HIM SANE WAS THE HOPE THAT HE MIGHT ONE DAY REGAIN HIS HUMANITY..
...THE KNOWLEDGE THAT UNDER ALL THAT SLIME HE WAS STILL ALEC HOLLAND
BUT IF HE'S READ MY NOTES HE'LL KNOW THAT JUST ISN'T TRUE.
HE ISN'T ALEC HOLLAND.
HE NEVER WILL BE ALEC HOLLAND.
HE NEVER WAS ALEC HOLLAND.
HE'S JUST A GHOST.
A GHOST DRESSED IN WEEDS.
I WONDER HOW HE'LL TAKE IT?
IDENTIFICATION UNCONFIRMED
NO EXIT
AND I WONDER HOW THE OLD MAN WILL TAKE IT...
21
...WHEN THE DOORS WON'T OPEN?
CONTINUED ON 33RD PAGE FOLLOWING

HE'LL POUND.
HE'LL HAMMER.
HE'LL WHEEZE AND HE'LL SCREAM AND HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND HOW THIS COULD BE HAPPENING TO HIM...
THE OLD REPTILE.
AND WILL THERE BE BLOOD?
I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T KNOW IF THERE WILL BE BLOOD.
IT ISN'T IMPORTANT.
IT WON'T SPOIL THINGS IF THERE IS NO BLOOD.
THE BLOOD DOESN'T MATTER.
JUST THE DYING.
22

THE DYING'S ALL THAT MATTERS.

AND WHAT THEN?
WHERE WOULD THE CREATURE GO THEN?
I HAVE TO KNOW. I HAVE TO FOLLOW HIM. THERE'S SO MUCH TO LEARN, SO MUCH TO KNOW...
WHERE WOULD I GO IF I WERE THE SWAMP THING?
I'D GO BACK TO LOUISIANA BACK TO THE MUD AND THE STEAM AND THE FLIES...
BACK TO THE BAYOU.
BACK HOME...
I HAVE A LOT TO DO TOMORROW
NO MATTER
FOR THE MOMENT I AM CONTENT SIMPLY TO THINK, AND TO PLAN...
...AND TO LISTEN.
IT'S RAINING IN WASHINGTON TONIGHT.
23
NEXT: SWAMPED!

The SAGA of The
SWAMP THING
22
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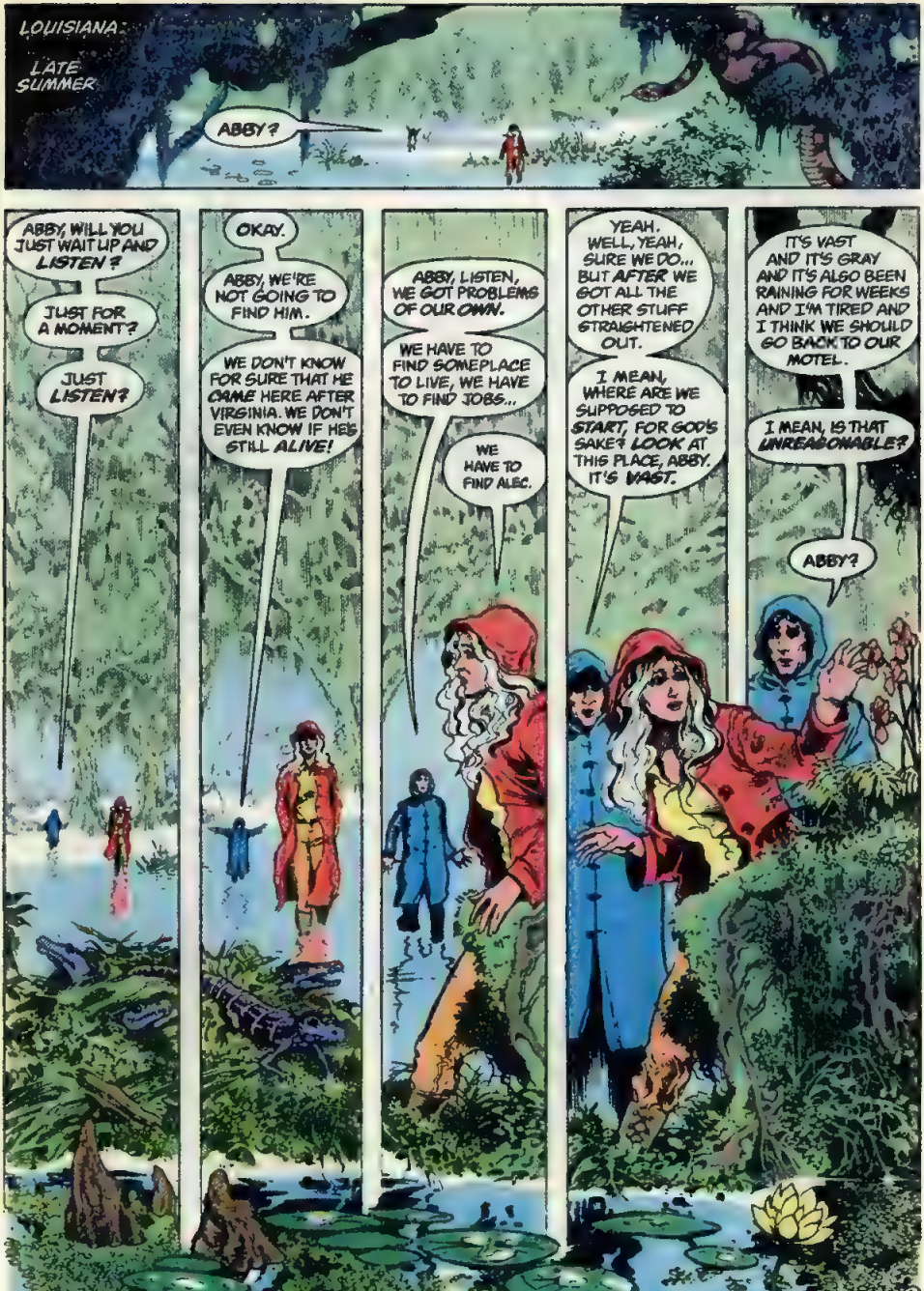
GET
THE NEW TEEN
TITANS
POSTER BY PEREZ
T. YEATES


LOUISIANA: LATE SUMMER
ABBY?
ABBY, WILL YOU JUST WAIT UP AND LISTEN?
JUST FOR A MOMENT?
JUST LISTEN?
OKAY.
ABBY, WE'RE NOT GOING TO FIND HIM.
WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE THAT HE CAME HERE AFTER VIRGINIA. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF HE'S STILL ALIVE!
ABBY, LISTEN, WE GOT PROBLEMS OF OUR OWN.
WE HAVE TO FIND SOMEPLACE TO LIVE, WE HAVE TO FIND JOBS...
WE HAVE TO FIND ALEC.
YEAH. WELL, YEAH, SURE WE DO... BUT AFTER WE GOT ALL THE OTHER STUFF STRAIGHTENED OUT.
I MEAN, WHERE ARE WE SUPPOSED TO START, FOR GOD'S SAKE? LOOK AT THIS PLACE, ABBY. IT'S VAST.
IT'S VAST AND IT'S GRAY AND IT'S ALSO BEEN RAINING FOR WEEKS AND I'M TIRED AND I THINK WE SHOULD GO BACK TO OUR MOTEL.
I MEAN, IS THAT UNREASONABLE?
ABBY?

THE SAGA OF SWAMP THING 22 Published monthly by DC Comics Inc. 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103 POSTMASTER Send address changes to DC Comics Inc., Subscription Dept., PO Box 1306-F Fort Lee, NJ 07024 Annual subscription rate $9.00 Outside USA $10.00 Copyright © 1983 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. Printed in USA Advertising Representative: Sanford Schwarz & Co., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212) 391-1400
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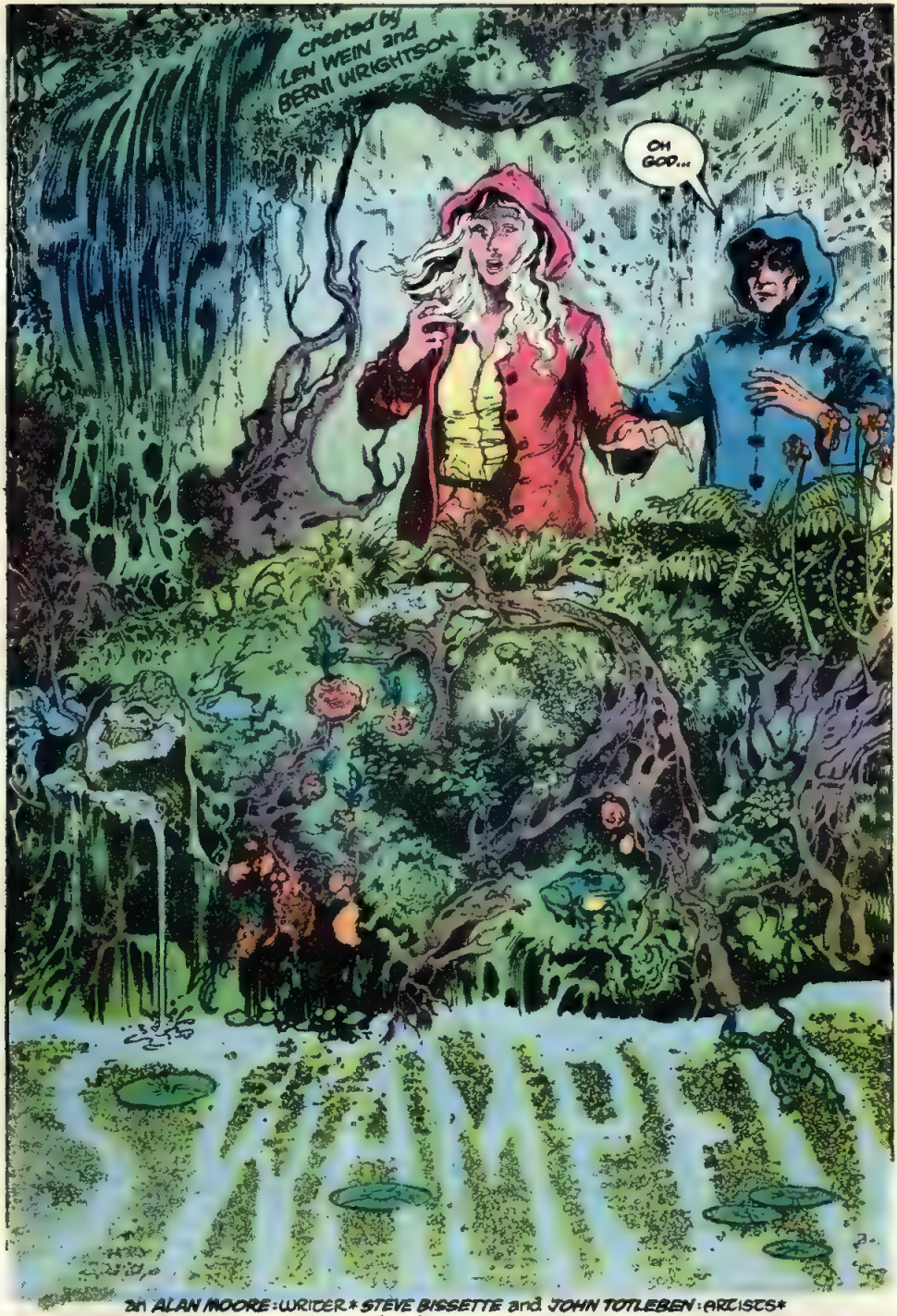
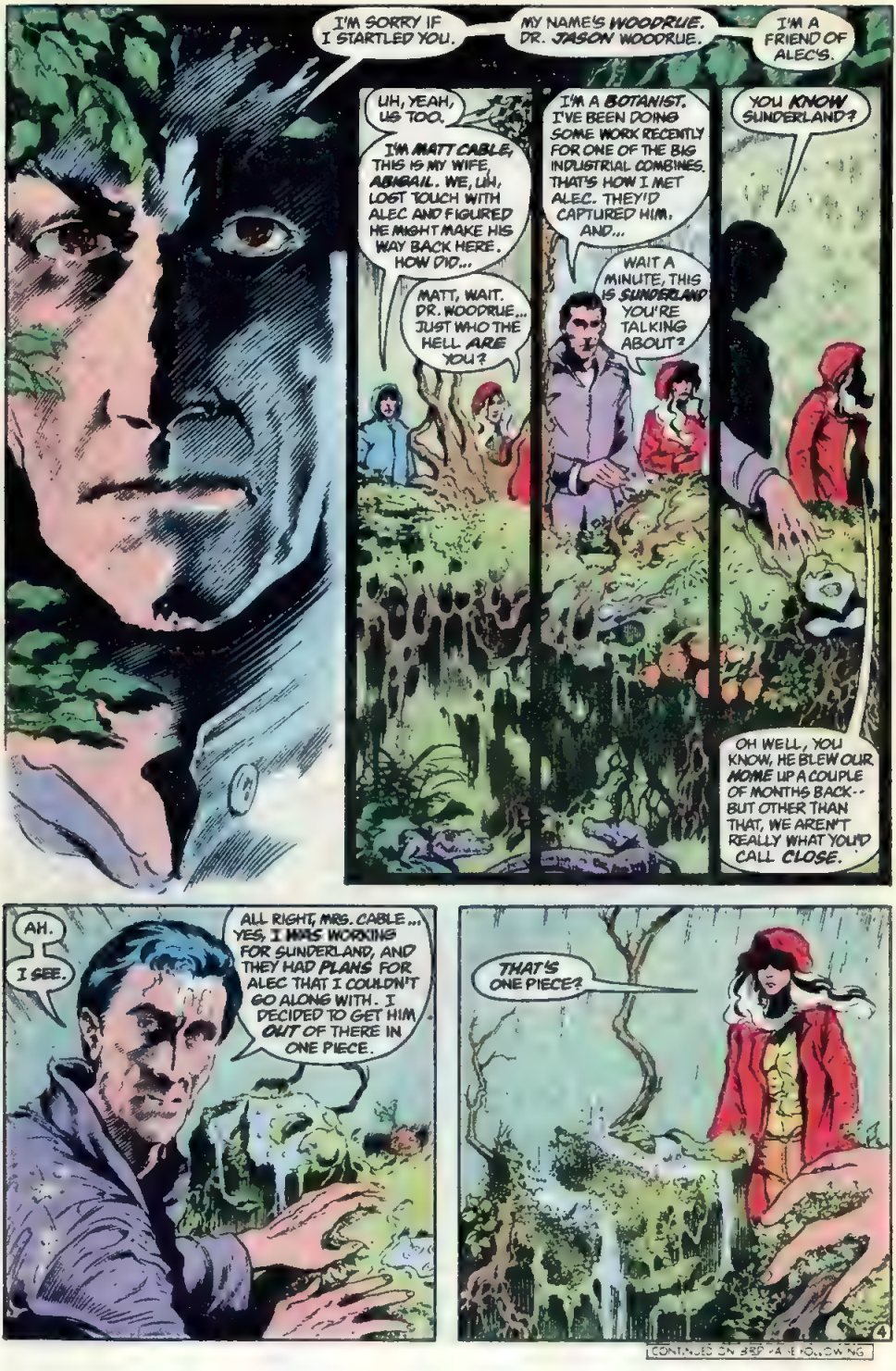


an ALAN MOORE: WRITER * STEVE BISSETTE and JOHN TOTLEBEN: ARTISTS *
LEN WEIN: EDITOR presentation, assisted by TATJANA WOOD: COLORIST * TODD KLEIN: LETTERS

MATT...
WHAT'S HAPPENED? THIS IS ALEC, ISN'T IT? BUT HE'S...
MATT, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ALEC?
MATT, LOOK, HE'S...
OH NO, MATT, LOOK, HE'S ROOTED! HE'S ROOTED INTO THE SWAMP!
AND, AND...OH LOOK... HE'S GOT STUFF GROWING ON HIM AND EVERYTHING!
OH NO.
OH ALEC...
ABBY, LIH, LOOK, I DON'T KNOW HOW...
RRELLIGH! OH NO...
WHAT?
IN HIS ARM!
I SAW AN INSECT! THERE'S AN INSECT IN HIS ARM!
LIH... LOOK, YOU PROBABLY IMAGINED IT...
PSSSHHT
I DIDN'T! I SAW IT!
THIS IS HORRIBLE. HE'S DEAD, ISN'T HE? ALEC'S DEAD.
NO. NOT DEAD.
3

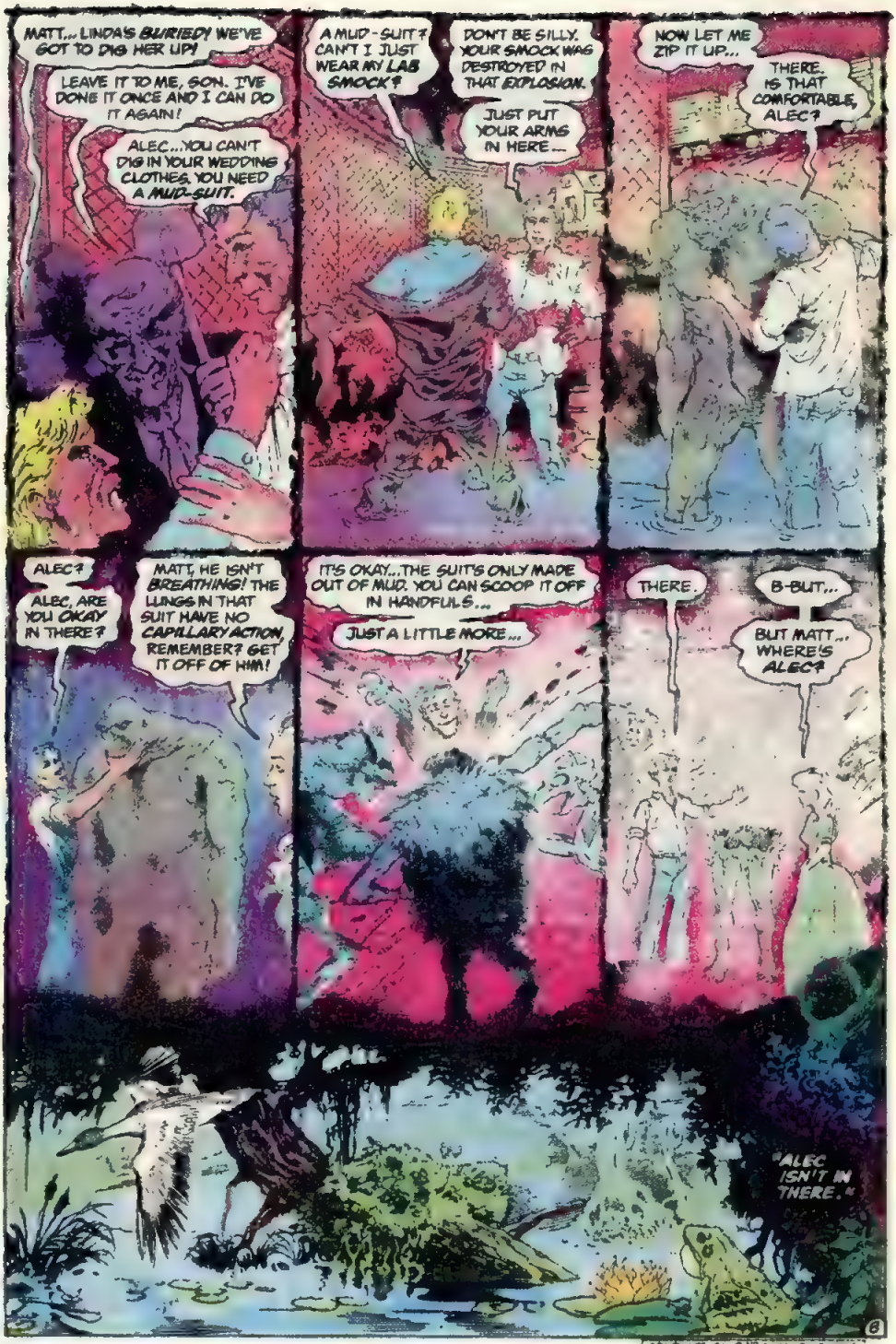

I'M SORRY IF I STARTLED YOU.
MY NAME'S WOODRUE. DR. JASON WOODRUE.
I'M A FRIEND OF ALEC'S.
UH, YEAH, US TOO.
I'M MATT CABLE, THIS IS MY WIFE, ABIGAIL. WE, UH, LOST TOUCH WITH ALEC AND FIGURED HE MIGHT MAKE HIS WAY BACK HERE. HOW DID...
MATT, WAIT. DR. WOODRUE... JUST WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
I'M A BOTANIST. I'VE BEEN DOING SOME WORK RECENTLY FOR ONE OF THE BIG INDUSTRIAL COMBINES. THAT'S HOW I MET ALEC. THEY'D CAPTURED HIM, AND...
WAIT A MINUTE, THIS IS SUNDERLAND YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?
YOU KNOW SUNDERLAND?
OH WELL, YOU KNOW, HE BLEW OUR HOME UP A COUPLE OF MONTHS BACK-- BUT OTHER THAN THAT, WE AREN'T REALLY WHAT YOU'D CALL CLOSE.
AH. I SEE.
ALL RIGHT, MRS. CABLE... YES, I WAS WORKING FOR SUNDERLAND, AND THEY HAD PLANS FOR ALEC THAT I COULDN'T GO ALONG WITH. I DECIDED TO GET HIM OUT OF THERE IN ONE PIECE.
THAT'S ONE PIECE?
4

CONTINUES ON PAGE FOLLOWING

IT'S AS CLOSE AS YOU'RE GOING TO GET.
I'M AFRAID THAT ALEC SUFFERED A PSYCHOLOGICAL SETBACK WHILE IN SUNDERLAND'S CARE.
PSYCHOLOGICAL? HE'S ROOTED! HE'S GOT BUGS IN HIM! WHAT'S PSYCHOLOGICAL ABOUT THAT?
MRS. CABLE, YOU'RE NOT LETTING ME FINISH.
WHILE IN SUNDERLAND'S CARE, ALEC DISCOVERED HARD, NEW SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE CONCERNING HIS ORIGINS.
EVIDENCE THAT IMPLIED HE WASN'T REALLY ALEC HOLLAND!
EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS A MASS OF PLANT FIBER THAT HAD SOMEHOW BEEN INFECTED WITH THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ALEC HOLLAND.
JUST THE MOSS-ENCRUSTED ECHO OF A MAN.
NOT A MAN AT ALL.
I'VE BEEN HERE FOR THREE WEEKS NOW, STUDYING HIM. BELIEVE ME, MRS. CABLE ... WHATEVER THIS LOOKS LIKE, THE PROBLEM IS PSYCHOLOGICAL.
IMAGINE ALL THOSE YEARS OF HOPING THAT ONE DAY HE'D RETRIEVE HIS HUMANITY...
...ONLY TO FIND HE'D NEVER HAD ANY IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HE'S GIVEN UP ON BEING HUMAN. IT GOT TO BE TOO MUCH FOR HIM AND HE HAD TO LET IT GO. HE'S WITHDRAWN.
HE'S A VEGETABLE.
HE HASN'T MOVED IN A FORTNIGHT. HE'S PUT DOWN TAPROOTS AND STOPPED PRETENDING TO BREATHE.
AND THEN THERE'RE THESE FASCINATING TUBERS THAT HE'S PRODUCING.
I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY THEM UP CLOSE, BUT I TOOK A SCHIST FROM ONE OF THEM AND EXAMINED IT THROUGH A MICROSCOPE.
SIMILAR STRUCTURE TO A YAM.
MAYBE EVEN EDIBLE.
5

HHRAUULP!
MRS. CABLE?
UH, LOOK DR. WOODRUE, ABBY'S NOT FEELING SO GOOD. SHE'S BEEN UNDER PRESSURE LATELY, AND WELL, YOU KNOW...
WE'RE IN A MOTEL JUST OUTSIDE OF HOUMA. I BETTER GET HER BACK THERE.
YES, OF COURSE.
MAYBE WE'LL BE BACK SOON. I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE WHEN ABBY'S RESTED...
I'LL BE HERE.
WELL, YEAH. GOOD-BYE.
GOOD-BYE, MR. CABLE.
THEY SPLASH AWAY, THROUGH THE SWAMP, THROUGH THE RAIN...
HOW CRETINOUS THEY ARE. HOW FRAIL AND SQUEAMISH...
...BUT REALLY, WHAT CAN ONE EXPECT FROM CREATURES MADE OF MEAT?
NOT LIKE US, EH, MY FRIEND?
NOT LIKE US.
YOU'RE MAKING THE CHANGE, AREN'T YOU? GIVING UP THE ILLUSION OF MEATHOOD AND SINKING BACK INTO THE SOFT AND WELCOMING GREEN.
IT IS BREATHTAKING TO OBSERVE.
HOW I ENVY YOU.
6

"HOW I WONDER WHERE YOU ARE."
TO ALEC!
TO LINDA!
TO ALEC AND LINDA!
TINK!
IT'S A LOVELY WEDDING RECEPTION, ALEC. YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT'S IN THESE HORS D' OEUVRES.
I...I THINK LINDA SAID SOMETHING ABOUT PLANARIAN WORMS.
ABBY...WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WE HAVEN'T MET YET...
OH, ALEC! DON'T BE SUCH A MEGETABLE!
LOOK, I MUST DASH... I SEE MY UNCLE OVER THERE, TALKING TO MY HUSBAND. THEY'RE INSEPARABLE INSECTS, YOU KNOW...
YOUR UNCLE? YOU MEAN ARCANE? BUT HE'S DEAD... I SAW THE BODY...
OH, THAT WAS JUST A PLANT. BUT THEN, SO ARE YOU...
BYE.
ALEC... ALEC, I DON'T FEEL VERY WELL. IT'S THIS BULLET HOLE...
LINDA?
I'M SORRY, ALEC. THIS MEANS YOU'LL BE A GRASS WIDOWER.
LINDA? LINDA, I LOVE YOU! PLEASE DON'T GO!
LINDA, PLEASE... I'LL BUY A RESTORATIVE FORMULA! I'LL DO ANYTHING!
DON'T LEAVE ME, LINDA...


MATT... LINDA'S BURIED! WE'VE GOT TO DIG HER UP!
LEAVE IT TO ME, SON. I'VE DONE IT ONCE AND I CAN DO IT AGAIN!
ALEC... YOU CAN'T DIG IN YOUR WEDDING CLOTHES. YOU NEED A MUD-SUIT.
A MUD-SUIT? CAN'T I JUST WEAR MY LAB SMOCK?
DON'T BE SILLY. YOUR SMOCK WAS DESTROYED IN THAT EXPLOSION.
JUST PUT YOUR ARMS IN HERE...
NOW LET ME ZIP IT UP...
THERE. IS THAT COMFORTABLE, ALEC?
ALEC?
ALEC, ARE YOU OKAY IN THERE?
MATT, HE ISN'T BREATHING! THE LUNGS IN THAT SUIT HAVE NO CAPILLARY ACTION, REMEMBER? GET IT OFF OF HIM!
IT'S OKAY... THE SUIT'S ONLY MADE OUT OF MUD. YOU CAN SCOOP IT OFF IN HANDFULS...
JUST A LITTLE MORE...
THERE.
B-BUT...
BUT MATT... WHERE'S ALEC?
"ALEC ISN'T IN THERE."
8

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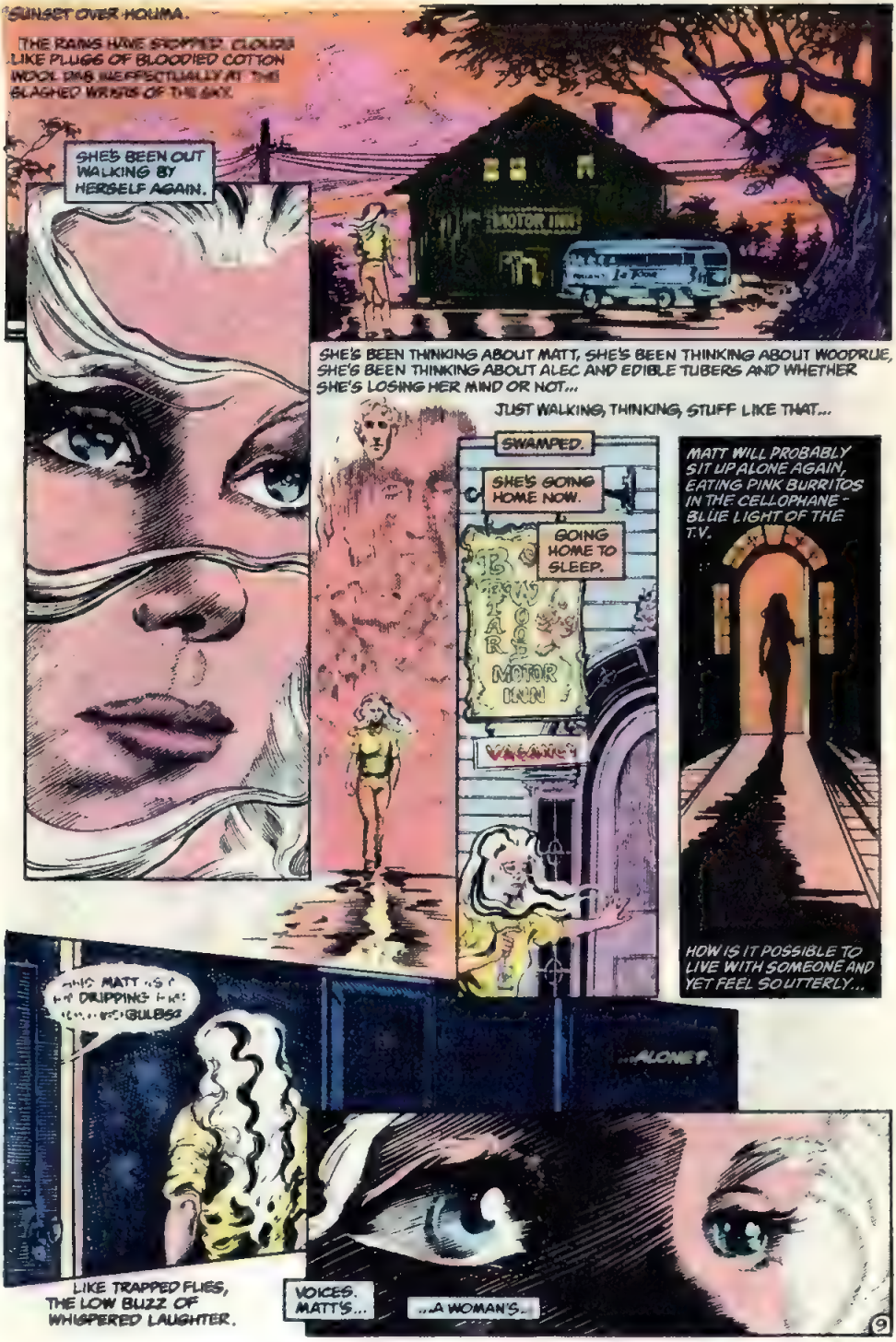
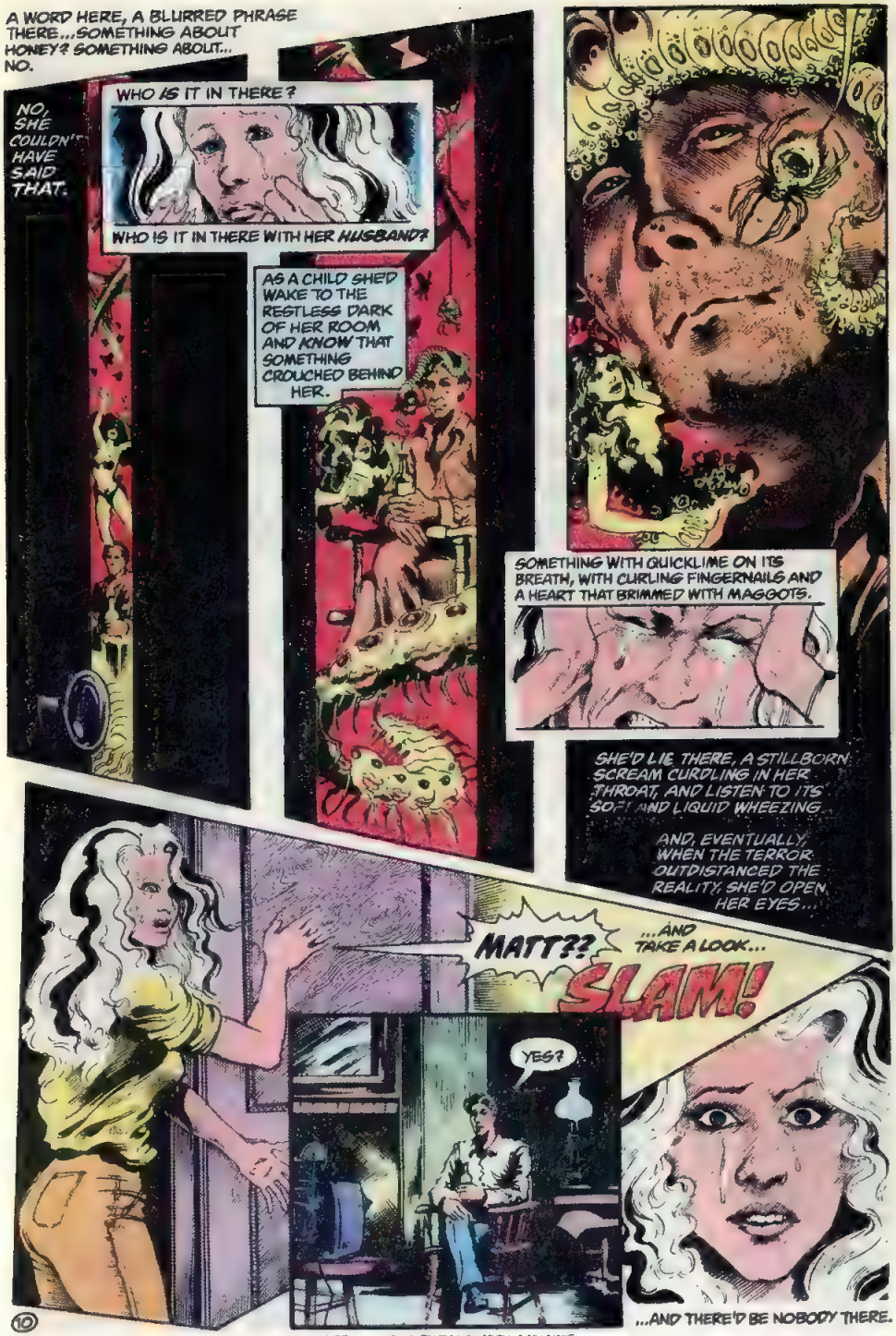

SUNSET OVER HOUMA.
THE RAINS HAVE STOPPED. CLOUDS LIKE PLUGS OF BLOODIED COTTON WOOL PAD INEFFECTUALLY AT THE SLASHED WRISTS OF THE SKY.
SHE'S BEEN OUT WALKING BY HERSELF AGAIN.
MOTOR INN
SHE'S BEEN THINKING ABOUT MATT, SHE'S BEEN THINKING ABOUT WOODRUE, SHE'S BEEN THINKING ABOUT ALEC AND EDIBLE TUBERS AND WHETHER SHE'S LOSING HER MIND OR NOT...
JUST WALKING, THINKING, STUFF LIKE THAT...
SWAMPED.
SHE'S GOING HOME NOW.
GOING HOME TO SLEEP.
MOTOR INN
VACANCY
MATT WILL PROBABLY SIT UP ALONE AGAIN, EATING PINK BURRITOS IN THE CELLOPHANE-BLUE LIGHT OF THE T.V.
HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE WITH SOMEONE AND YET FEEL SO UTTERLY...
...ALONE?
LIKE TRAPPED FLIES, THE LOW BUZZ OF WHISPERED LAUGHTER.
VOICES. MATT'S...
...A WOMAN'S...
9

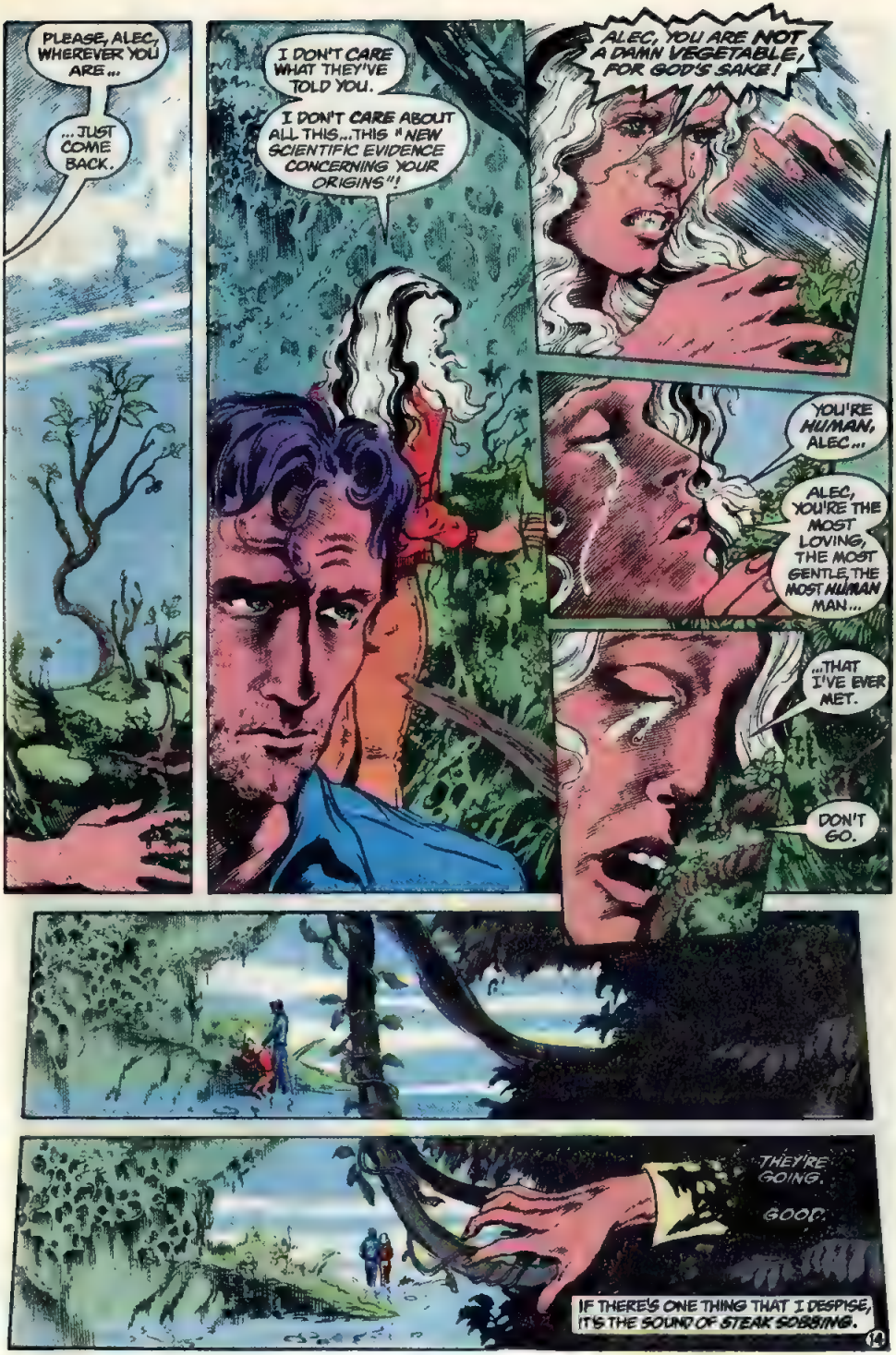

A WORD HERE, A BLURRED PHRASE THERE...SOMETHING ABOUT HONEY? SOMETHING ABOUT... NO.
NO, SHE COULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT.
WHO IS IT IN THERE?
WHO IS IT IN THERE WITH HER HUSBAND?
AS A CHILD SHE'D WAKE TO THE RESTLESS DARK OF HER ROOM AND KNOW THAT SOMETHING CROUCHED BEHIND HER.
SOMETHING WITH QUICKLIME ON ITS BREATH, WITH CURLING FINGERNAILS AND A HEART THAT BRIMMED WITH MAGGOTS.
SHE'D LIE THERE, A STILLBORN SCREAM CURDLING IN HER THROAT, AND LISTEN TO ITS SOFT AND LIQUID WHEEZING...
AND, EVENTUALLY, WHEN THE TERROR OUTDISTANCED THE REALITY, SHE'D OPEN HER EYES...
MATT??
...AND TAKE A LOOK...
SLAM!
YES?
...AND THERE'D BE NOBODY THERE.

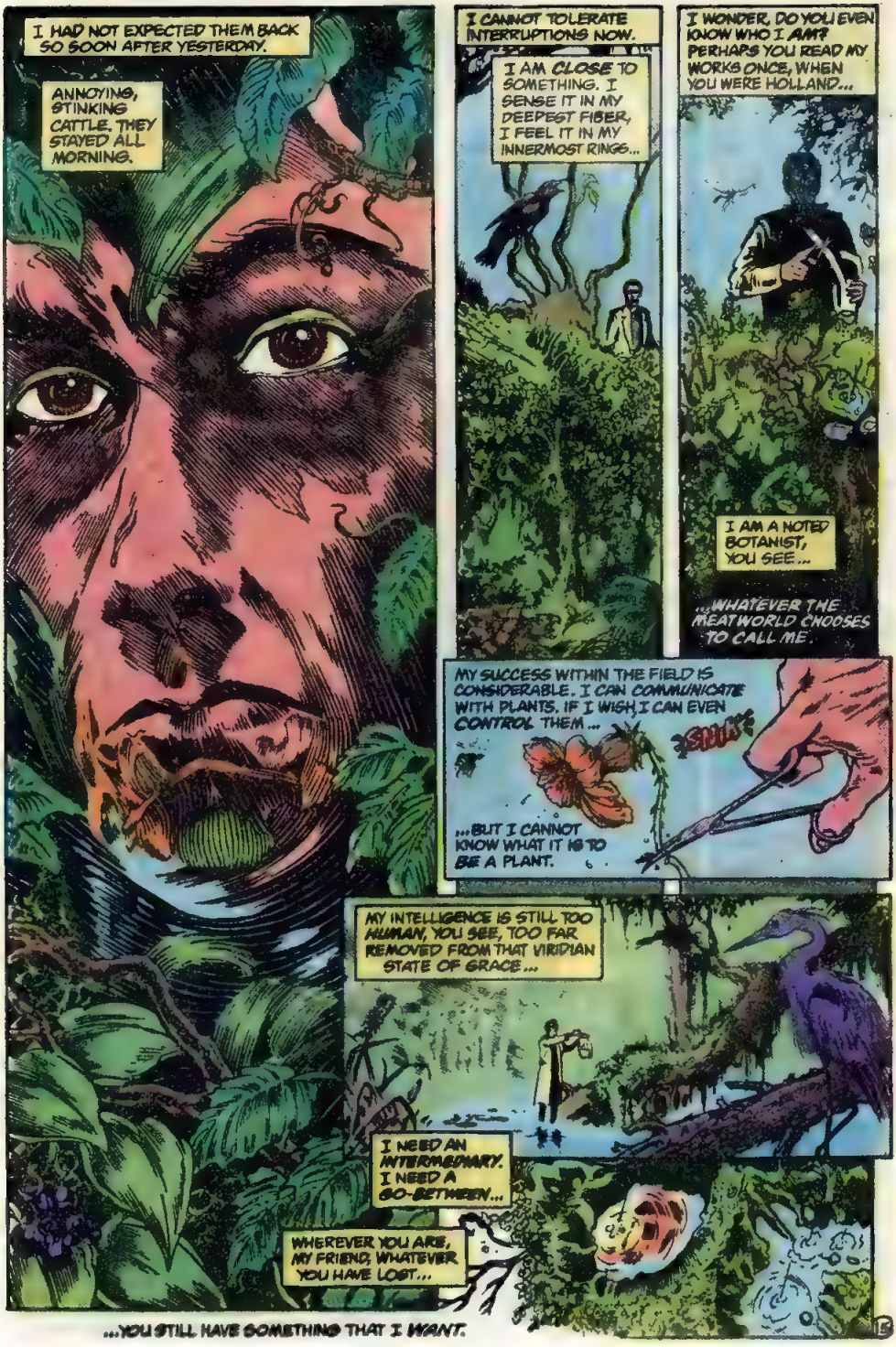
COLOR NOTE – CABLE LIT BY T.V. SCREEN BACKDROP

NOBODY THERE AT ALL.
IT'S AS IF HIS HUMANITY HAS JUST LEAKED AWAY DOWN THE SHOOTS AND STEMS, DISSIPATING, TRICKLING OUT INTO THE SWAMPS..
I WONDER WHAT IT WILL BE REPLACED BY?
TONIGHT'S POLYGRAPH READINGS WERE THE MOST EXCITING TO DATE.
I TOOK READINGS ON THE CREATURE, TOOK READINGS FROM THE SURROUNDING VEGETATION...
...AND THE LINES WERE IDENTICAL.
ZIP
HE IS PERFECTLY AT ONE WITH THE SWAMP, HE FEELS WHAT IT FEELS, KNOWS WHAT IT KNOWS...
WHAT MUST IT BE LIKE? TO SPREAD OUT WITH THE WATER HYACINTHS IN AN IMPLACABLE, CHOKING NET, TO KNOW THE GRAY DREAMS OF THE SPANISH MOSS...
ZIP
I HUNGER FOR IT.
I HUNGER FOR THAT GREEN AND SILENT ETERNITY.
I...
JUST AS I THOUGHT.
PERFECTLY EDIBLE.

EATS! COME AND GETCHA EATS!
IT'S OKAY, LINDA ...I JUST HEARD A VOICE...
WE CAN GET YOU HELP... WHERE THERE'S A VOICE THERE'S BOUND TO BE...
...PEOPLE?
COME AND GET IT! Ha-a-a!
HOWDY, STRANGERS! JUST IN TIME FOR THE BARBECUE!
WHAT CAN I GETCHA?
IT... IT'S MY WIFE... SHE NEEDS...A DOCTOR
WELL, WHADDYA KNOW? AS IT HAPPENS...
...THAT'S JUST WHAT WE'RE EATING! SIT DOWN AND TUCK IN!
OH...BY THE WAY, YOU'RE NOT JEWISH?
UH...NO... I COME... FROM HOLLAND.
GOOD. THAT'S GOOD. WE'RE ALL JUST PLAIN ARYAN WORMS HERE, YOU UNDERSTAND...
WELL, DON'T STAND ON CEREMONY... EAT! THIS STUFF'S REAL BRAIN FOOD!
BUT...
BUT THERE'S NOTHING LEFT.

HEY, YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT? YOU CAN'T REALLY BE THAT GREEN?
WE LEFT YOU THE BEST PART.
WE LEFT YOU THE HUMANITY.
TRY NOT TO LOSE IT.
I'M... SO SORRY, LINDA...
...BUT I JUST CAN'T... CARRY... BOTH OF YOU.
"ALEC? ALEC, COME BACK..."
13


PLEASE, ALEC, WHEREVER YOU ARE...
...JUST COME BACK.
I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY'VE TOLD YOU.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT ALL THIS...THIS "NEW SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE CONCERNING YOUR ORIGINS"!
ALEC, YOU ARE NOT A DAMN VEGETABLE, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
YOU'RE HUMAN, ALEC...
ALEC, YOU'RE THE MOST LOVING, THE MOST GENTLE, THE MOST HUMAN MAN...
...THAT I'VE EVER MET.
DON'T GO.
THEY'RE GOING.
GOOD.
IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT I DESPISE, IT'S THE SOUND OF STEAK SOBBING.


I HAD NOT EXPECTED THEM BACK SO SOON AFTER YESTERDAY.
ANNOYING, STINKING CATTLE. THEY STAYED ALL MORNING.
I CANNOT TOLERATE INTERRUPTIONS NOW.
I AM CLOSE TO SOMETHING. I SENSE IT IN MY DEEPEST FIBER, I FEEL IT IN MY INNERMOST RINGS...
I WONDER, DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHO I AM? PERHAPS YOU READ MY WORKS ONCE, WHEN YOU WERE HOLLAND...
I AM A NOTED BOTANIST, YOU SEE...
...WHATEVER THE MEATWORLD CHOOSES TO CALL ME.
MY SUCCESS WITHIN THE FIELD IS CONSIDERABLE. I CAN COMMUNICATE WITH PLANTS. IF I WISH, I CAN EVEN CONTROL THEM...
...BUT I CANNOT KNOW WHAT IT IS TO BE A PLANT.
MY INTELLIGENCE IS STILL TOO HUMAN, YOU SEE, TOO FAR REMOVED FROM THAT VIRIDIAN STATE OF GRACE...
I NEED AN INTERMEDIARY. I NEED A GO-BETWEEN...
WHEREVER YOU ARE, MY FRIEND, WHATEVER YOU HAVE LOST...
...YOU STILL HAVE SOMETHING THAT I WANT.

NO! YOU CAN'T HAVE IT...
IT'S MY HUMANITY...
IT'S ALL I'VE GOT LEFT...
TELL IT TO THE MARINES, SON!
THAT'S RIGHT! WE ALL LOST OUR HUMANITY. WE ALL NEED PATCHIN' UP...
YOU CAN'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF, HOLLAND. WE ALL WANT A PIECE!
JUST DON'T LET IT BUG YOU...
HEY, I'LL DRINK TO THAT!
NO!!
IT'S MINE!!

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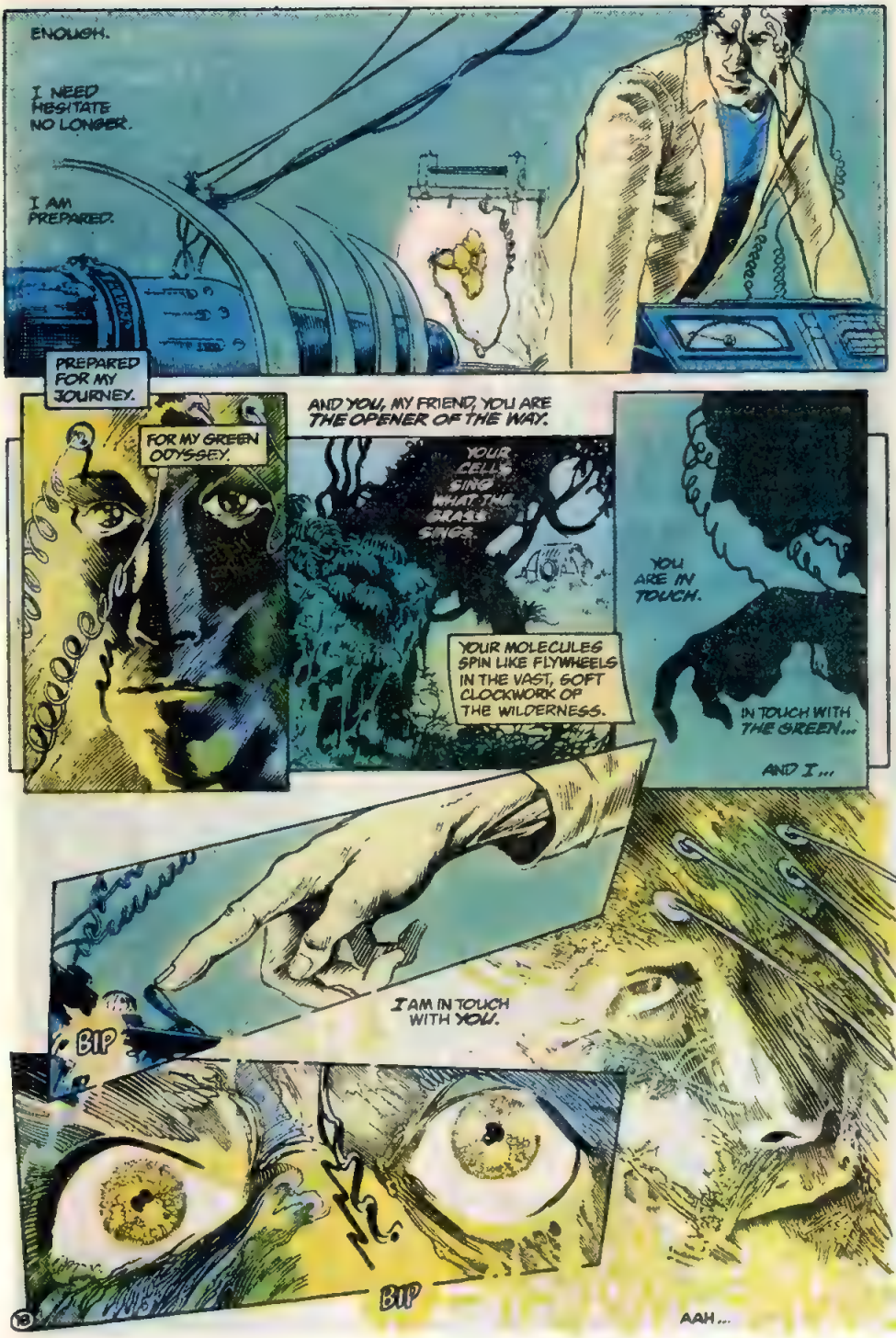
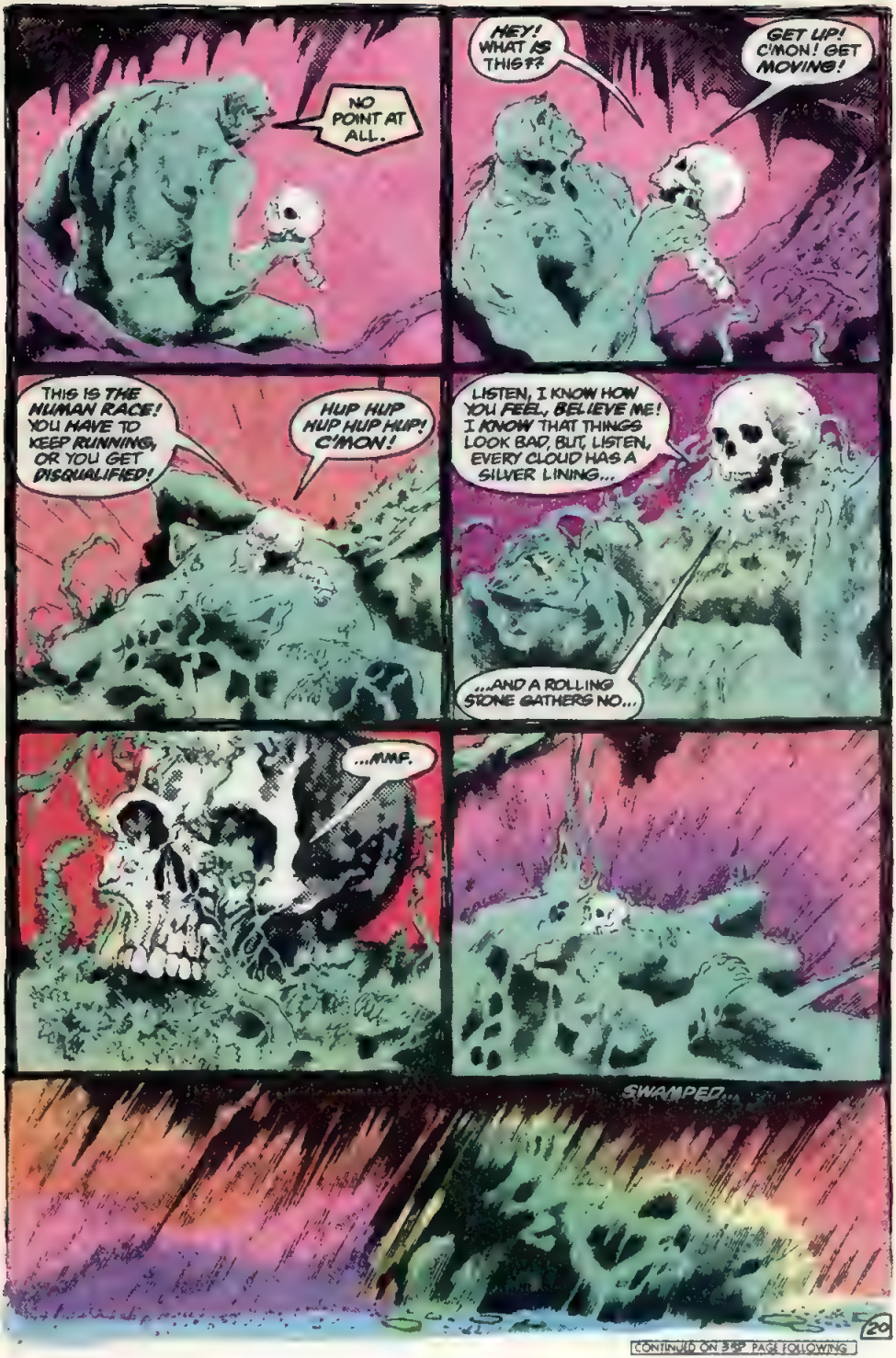

ENOUGH.
I NEED HESITATE NO LONGER.
I AM PREPARED.
PREPARED FOR MY JOURNEY.
FOR MY GREEN ODYSSEY.
AND YOU, MY FRIEND, YOU ARE THE OPENER OF THE WAY.
YOUR CELLS SING WHAT THE GRASS SINGS.
YOUR MOLECULES SPIN LIKE FLYWHEELS IN THE VAST, SOFT CLOCKWORK OF THE WILDERNESS.
YOU ARE IN TOUCH.
IN TOUCH WITH THE GREEN...
AND I...
I AM IN TOUCH WITH YOU.
BIP
BIP
AAH...

IT'S DARK.
IT'S COOL.
IT'S GREEN.
PLEASE... LET ME... REST...
NO, YOU CAN'T REST NOW! IF YOU SIT DOWN HERE, YOU'LL NEVER GET UP AGAIN!
C'MON! KEEP GOING! SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF!
YOU... KEEP... NAGGING.
WHY SHOULD... I CARRY YOU... WHEN YOU KEEP... NAGGING?
BECAUSE I'M YOUR HUMANITY! I'M IMPORTANT. I'M WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING.
YOU COULD LET GO OF LINDA, BUT YOU CAN'T LET GO OF ME.
OH, I KNOW I'M A LITTLE BEATEN UP AND BATTERED, BUT I'M STILL WORTH ALL THE EFFORT, AREN'T I?
AFTER ALL, WITHOUT ME THERE'D BE NO POINT IN RUNNING, WOULD THERE?
NO.


NO POINT AT ALL.
HEY! WHAT IS THIS??
GET UP! C'MON! GET MOVING!
THIS IS THE HUMAN RACE! YOU HAVE TO KEEP RUNNING, OR YOU GET DISQUALIFIED!
HUP HUP HUP HUP HUP! C'MON!
LISTEN, I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BELIEVE ME! I KNOW THAT THINGS LOOK BAD, BUT, LISTEN, EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING...
...AND A ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO...
...MMF.
SWAMPED...

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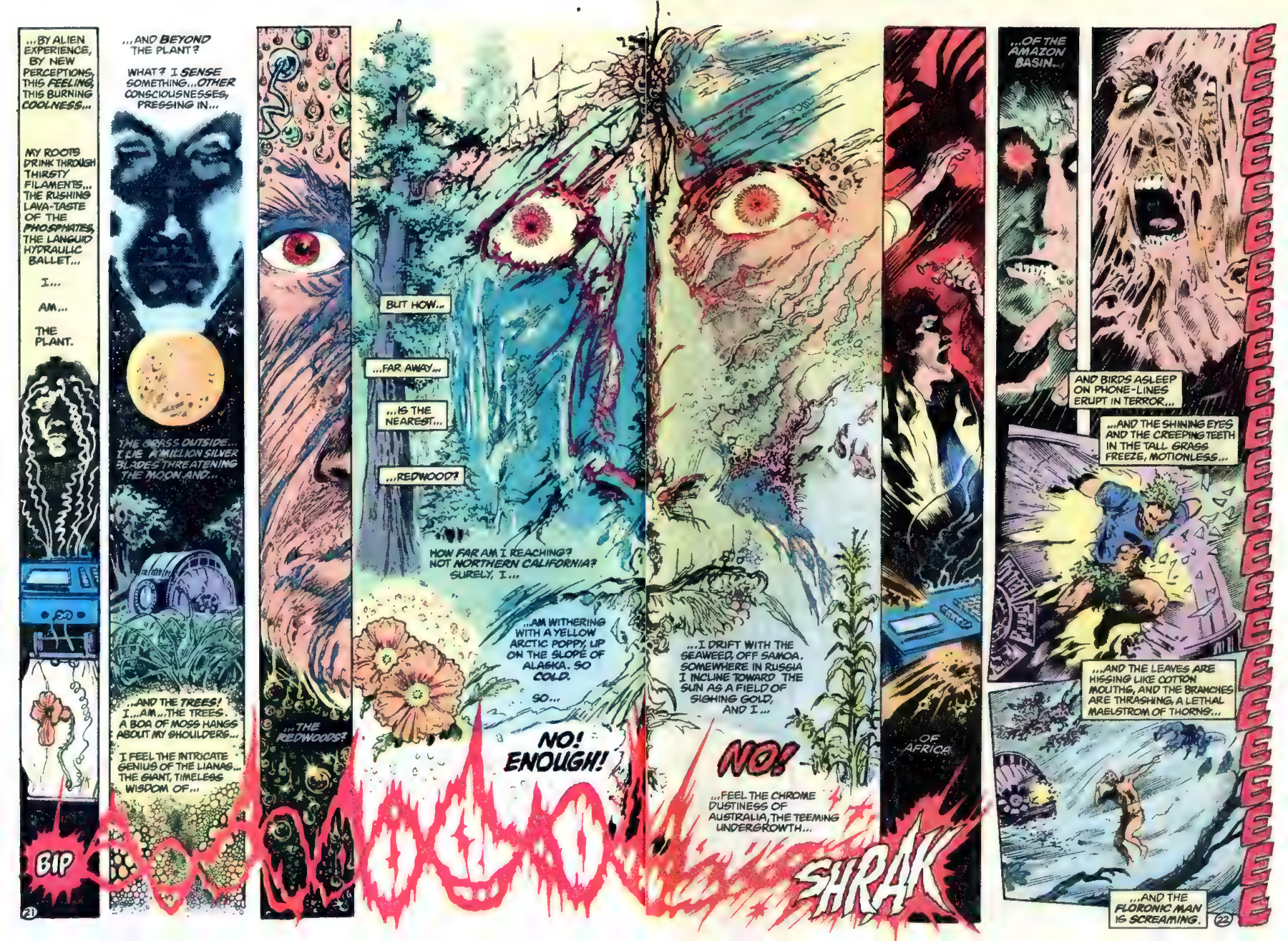
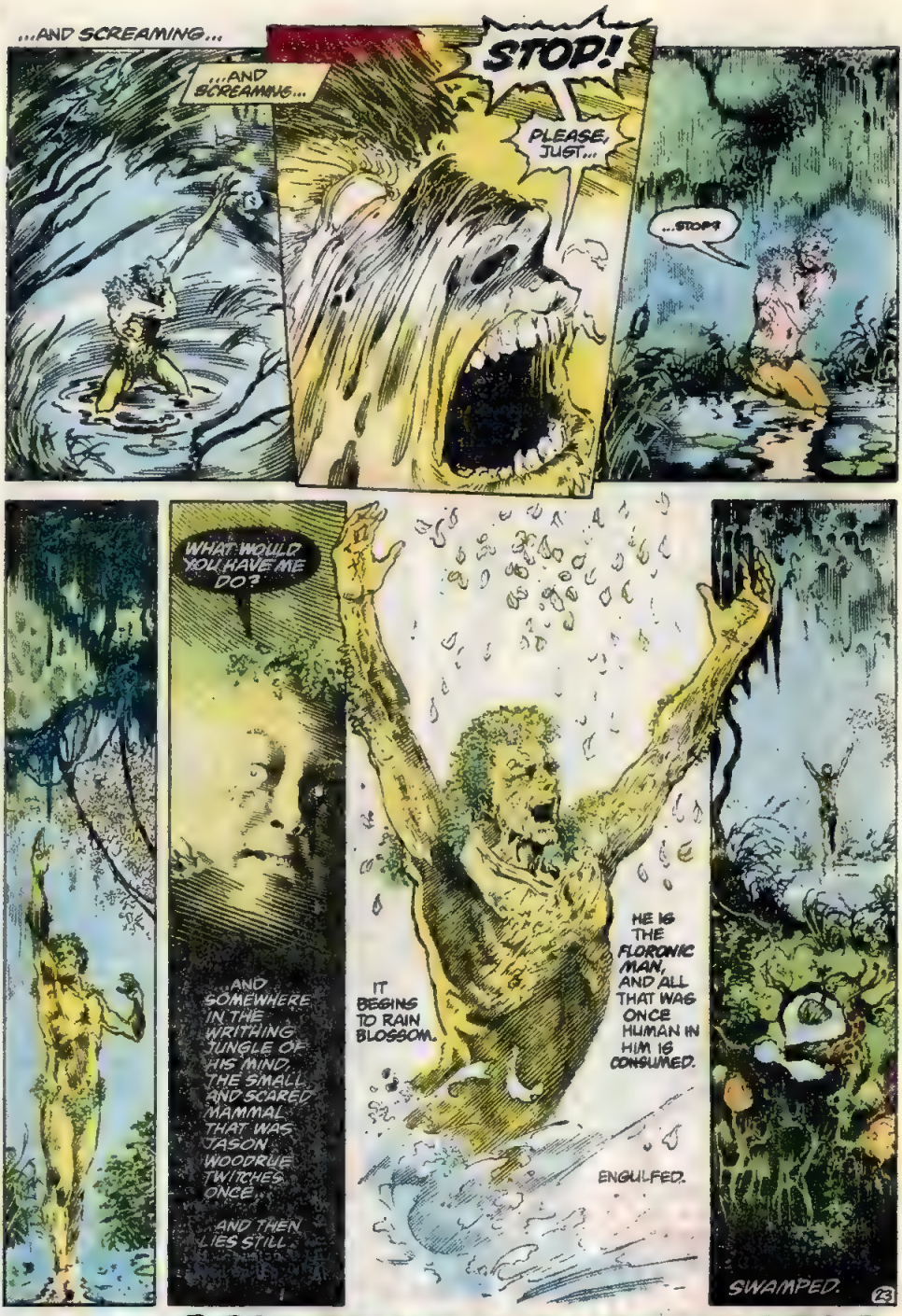

...BY ALIEN EXPERIENCE, BY NEW PERCEPTIONS, THIS FEELING, THIS BURNING COOLNESS...
MY ROOTS DRINK THROUGH THIRSTY FILAMENTS... THE RUSHING LAVA-TASTE OF THE PHOSPHATES, THE LANGUID HYDRAULIC BALLET...
I...
AM...
THE PLANT.
BIP
21
...AND BEYOND THE PLANT?
WHAT? I SENSE SOMETHING...OTHER CONSCIOUSNESSES, PRESSING IN...
THE GRASS OUTSIDE... I LIE A MILLION SILVER BLADES THREATENING THE MOON AND...
...AND THE TREES! I...AM...THE TREES. A BOA OF MOSS HANGS ABOUT MY SHOULDERS...
I FEEL THE INTRICATE GENIUS OF THE LIANAS... THE GIANT, TIMELESS WISDOM OF...
...THE REDWOODS?
BUT HOW...
...FAR AWAY...
...IS THE NEAREST...
...REDWOOD?
HOW FAR AM I REACHING? NOT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA? SURELY, I...
...AM WITHERING WITH A YELLOW ARCTIC POPPY, UP ON THE SLOPE OF ALASKA. SO COLD.
SO...
NO! ENOUGH!
...I DRIFT WITH THE SEAWEED, OFF SAMOA. SOMEWHERE IN RUSSIA I INCLINE TOWARD THE SUN AS A FIELD OF SIGHING GOLD, AND I...
NO!
...FEEL THE CHROME DUSTINESS OF AUSTRALIA, THE TEEMING UNDERGROWTH...
...OF AFRICA
SHRAK
...OF THE AMAZON BASIN...
EEEE


...AND SCREAMING...
...AND SCREAMING...
STOP!
PLEASE, JUST...
...STOP?
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
...AND SOMEWHERE IN THE WRITHING JUNGLE OF HIS MIND, THE SMALL AND SCARED MAMMAL THAT WAS JASON WOODRUE TWITCHES ONCE...
...AND THEN LIES STILL.
IT BEGINS TO RAIN BLOSSOM.
HE IS THE FLORONIC MAN, AND ALL THAT WAS ONCE HUMAN IN HIM IS CONSUMED.
ENGULFED.
SWAMPED.
23

NEXT: ANOTHER GREEN WORLD.

The SAGA of The
SWAMP THING
23
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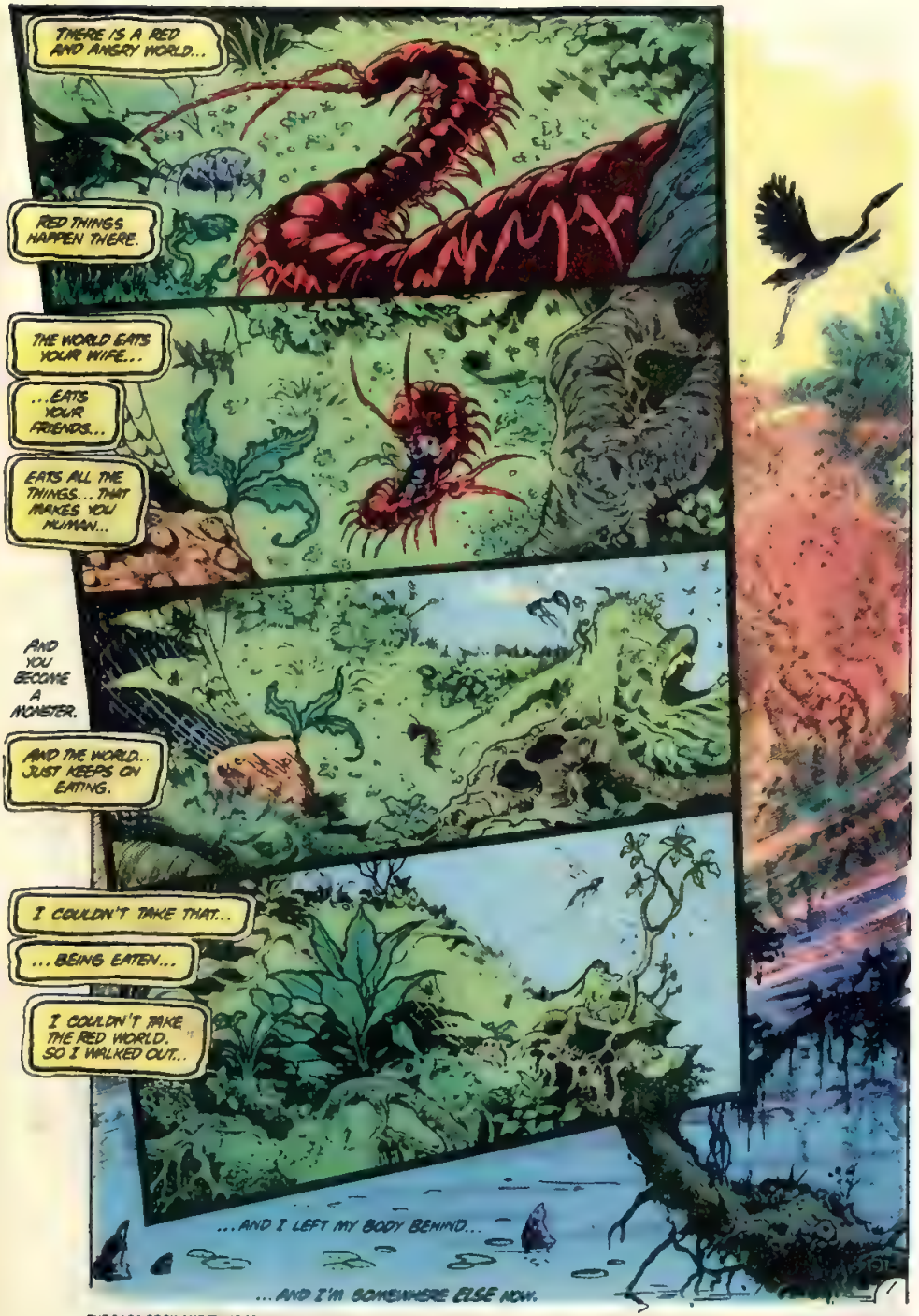
THE NEW DC.
THERE'S NO
STOPPING US NOW.


THERE IS A RED AND ANGRY WORLD...
RED THINGS HAPPEN THERE.
THE WORLD EATS YOUR WIFE...
...EATS YOUR FRIENDS...
EATS ALL THE THINGS... THAT MAKES YOU HUMAN...
AND YOU BECOME A MONSTER.
AND THE WORLD.. JUST KEEPS ON EATING.
I COULDN'T TAKE THAT...
...BEING EATEN...
I COULDN'T TAKE THE RED WORLD. SO I WALKED OUT..
...AND I LEFT MY BODY BEHIND...
...AND I'M SOMEWHERE ELSE NOW.

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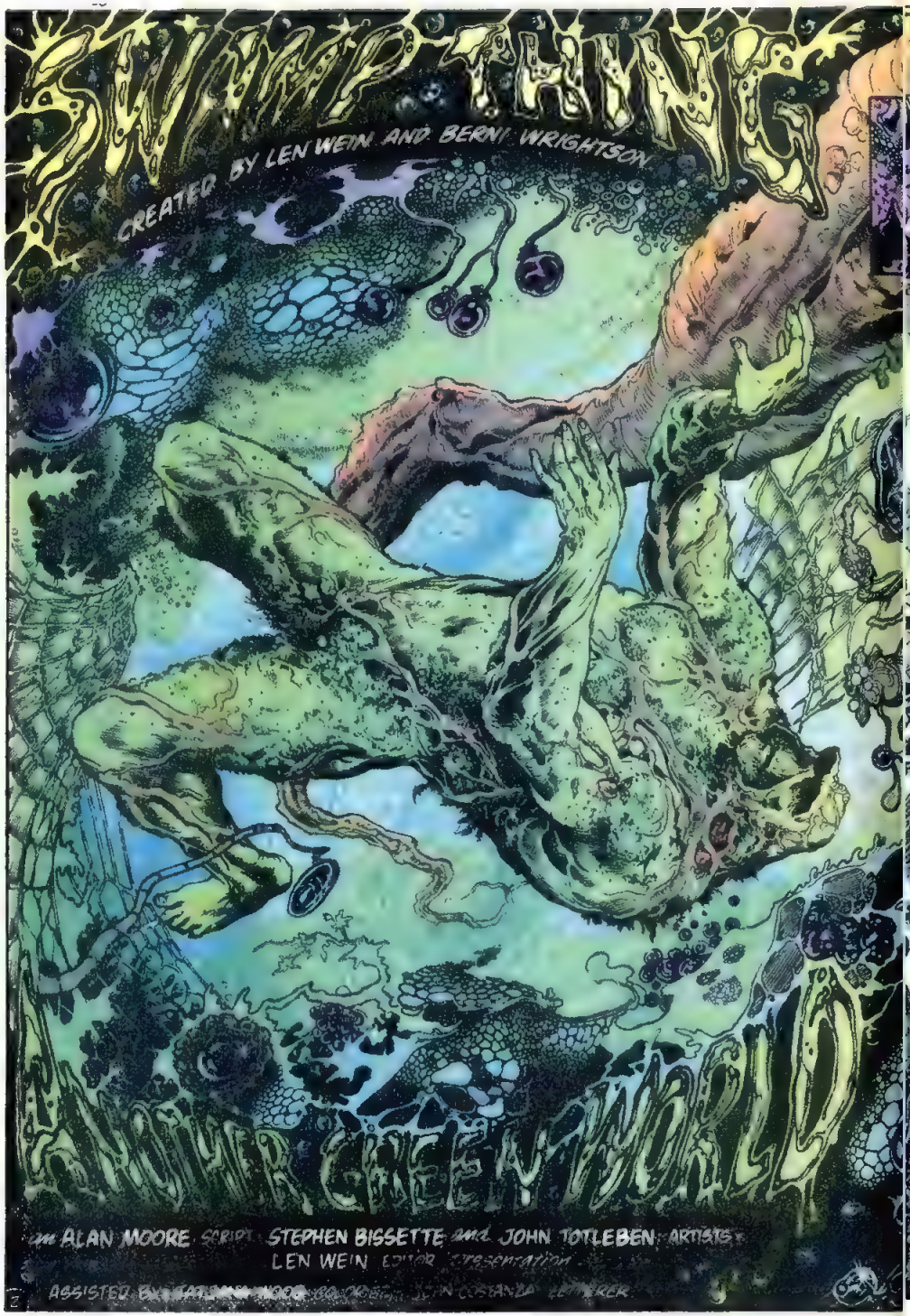
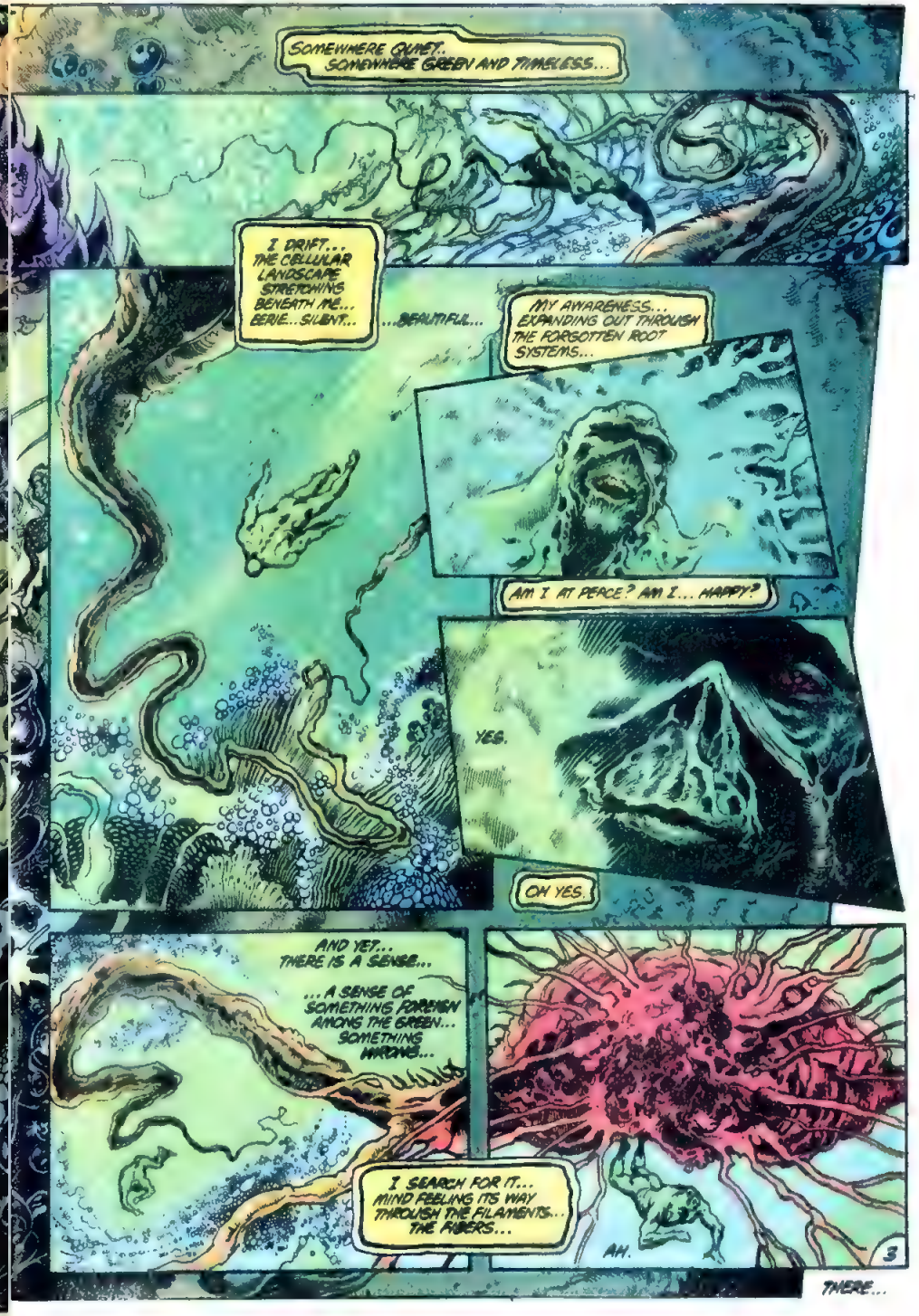

SWAMP THING
CREATED BY LEN WEIN AND BERNI WRIGHTSON
ANOTHER GREEN WORLD
ALAN MOORE SCRIPT STEPHEN BISSETTE and JOHN TOTLEBEN ARTISTS
LEN WEIN EDITOR

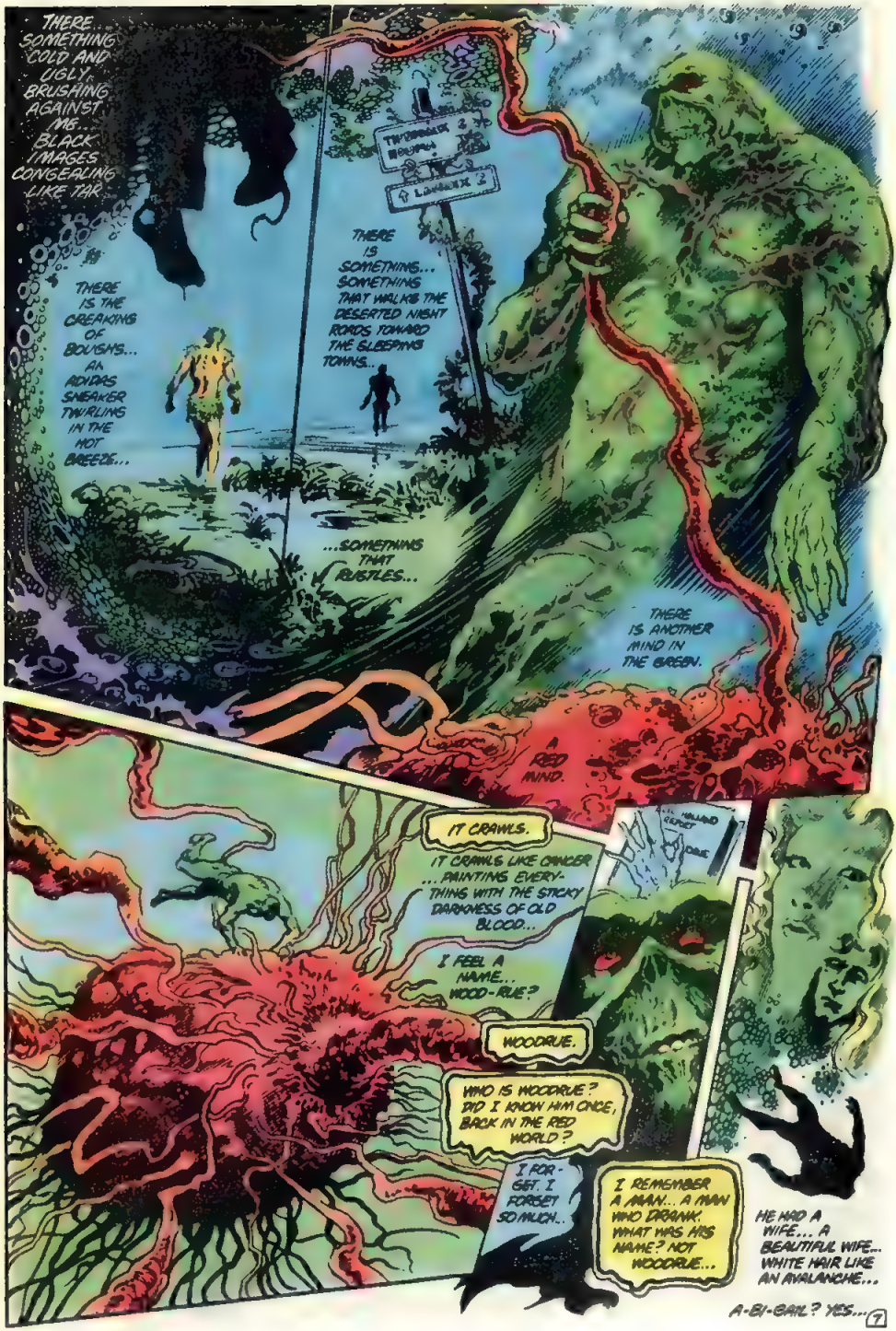

SOMEWHERE QUIET.. SOMEWHERE GREEN AND TIMELESS...
I DRIFT... THE CELLULAR LANDSCAPE STRETCHING BENEATH ME... EERIE... SILENT...
...BEAUTIFUL...
MY AWARENESS... EXPANDING OUT THROUGH THE FORGOTTEN ROOT SYSTEMS...
AM I AT PEACE? AM I... HAPPY?
YES.
OH YES.
AND YET... THERE IS A SENSE...
...A SENSE OF SOMETHING FOREIGN AMONG THE GREEN... SOMETHING WRONG...
I SEARCH FOR IT... MIND FEELING ITS WAY THROUGH THE FILAMENTS... THE FIBERS...
AH.
3
THERE...

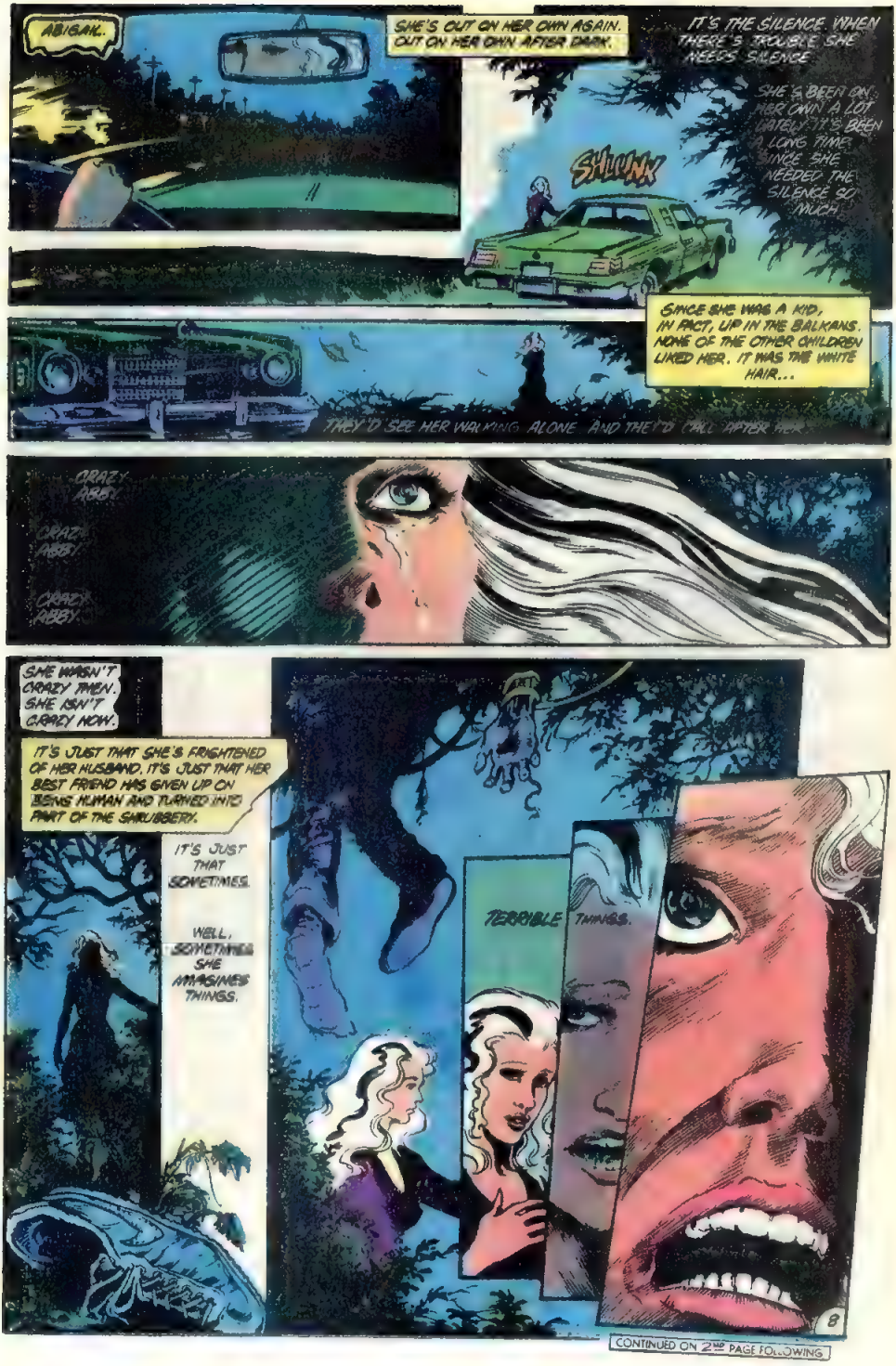
THERE!
I SAW IT AGAIN!
STUEY, YOU ARE REALLY SICK.
HEY, DUMONT! DUMONT, YOU COMATOSE BLOB OF BUTTER! STUEY JUST SAW THE JOLLY GREEN GIANT!
ISN'T THAT TOTALLY SICK?
...LEAVE ALONE...
IT WASN'T THE JOLLY GREEN GIANT.
IT WAS JUST, I DUNNO, LOOKED LIKE THE GUY HAD LEAVES ON HIS HEAD OR SOMETHIN'...
I'M GONNA TAKE A LOOK.
HEY! STUEY!!
HEY, STUEY, PICK ME UP A CAN 'A MEXICORN!!
IT'S FOR MY...
...MOTHER.
4

CONTINUED ON 35th PAGE FOLLOWING

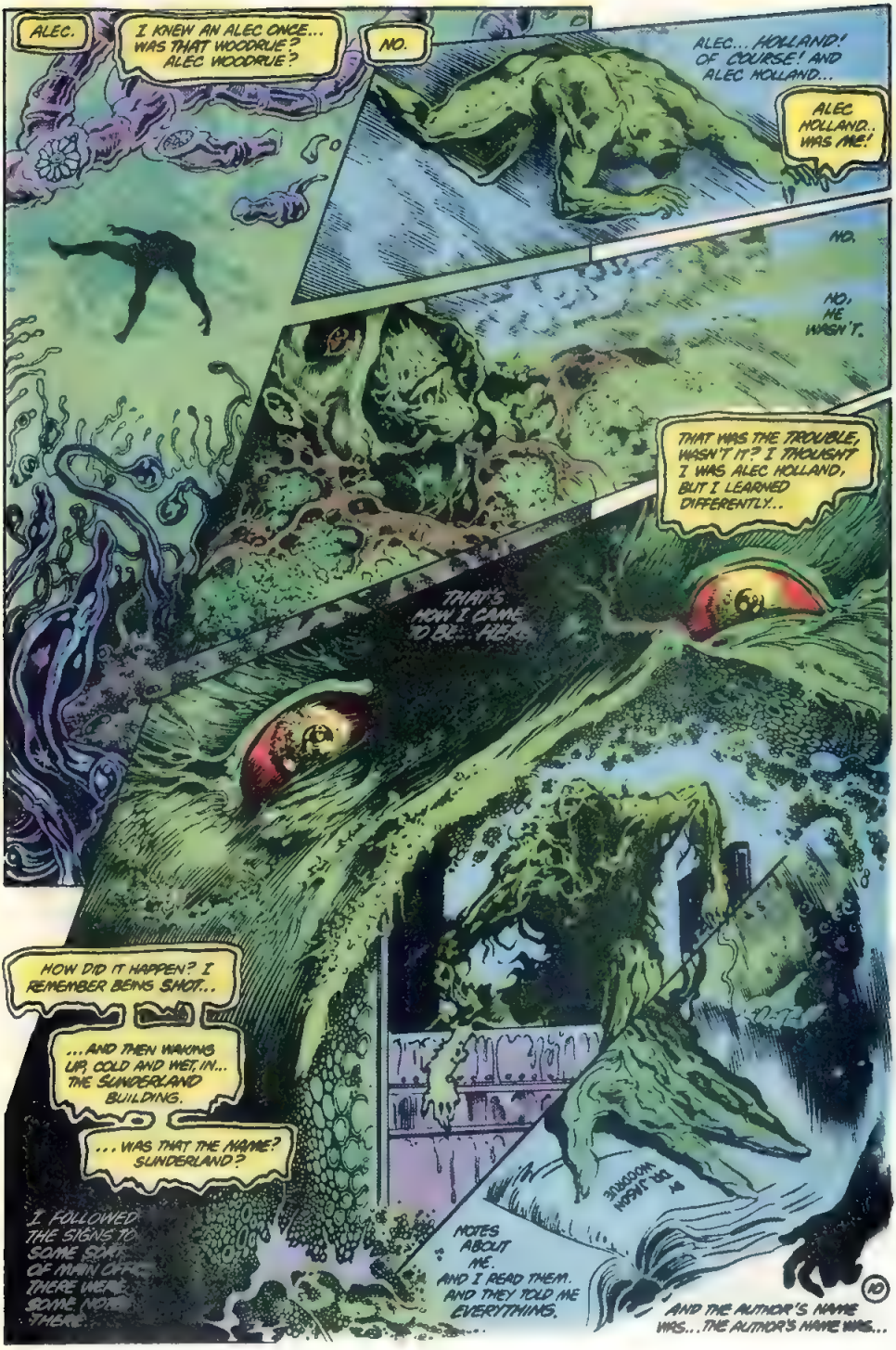
OKAY, RATBREATH, YOU MAN. YOU WERE RIGHT.
NOTHIN' THERE.
UH...
ANDY?
ANDY, WHAT'S THIS STUFF ON THE CAR? THIS IS MY DAD'S CAR, MAN.
HEY, ANDY?
LUP LUP LUP
LUP LUP
LUP LUP LUP LUP
5

EEEEEEEEEE
A-HUH
A-HUH
A-HUH
A-HUH
HUH
HUH
HU--
6

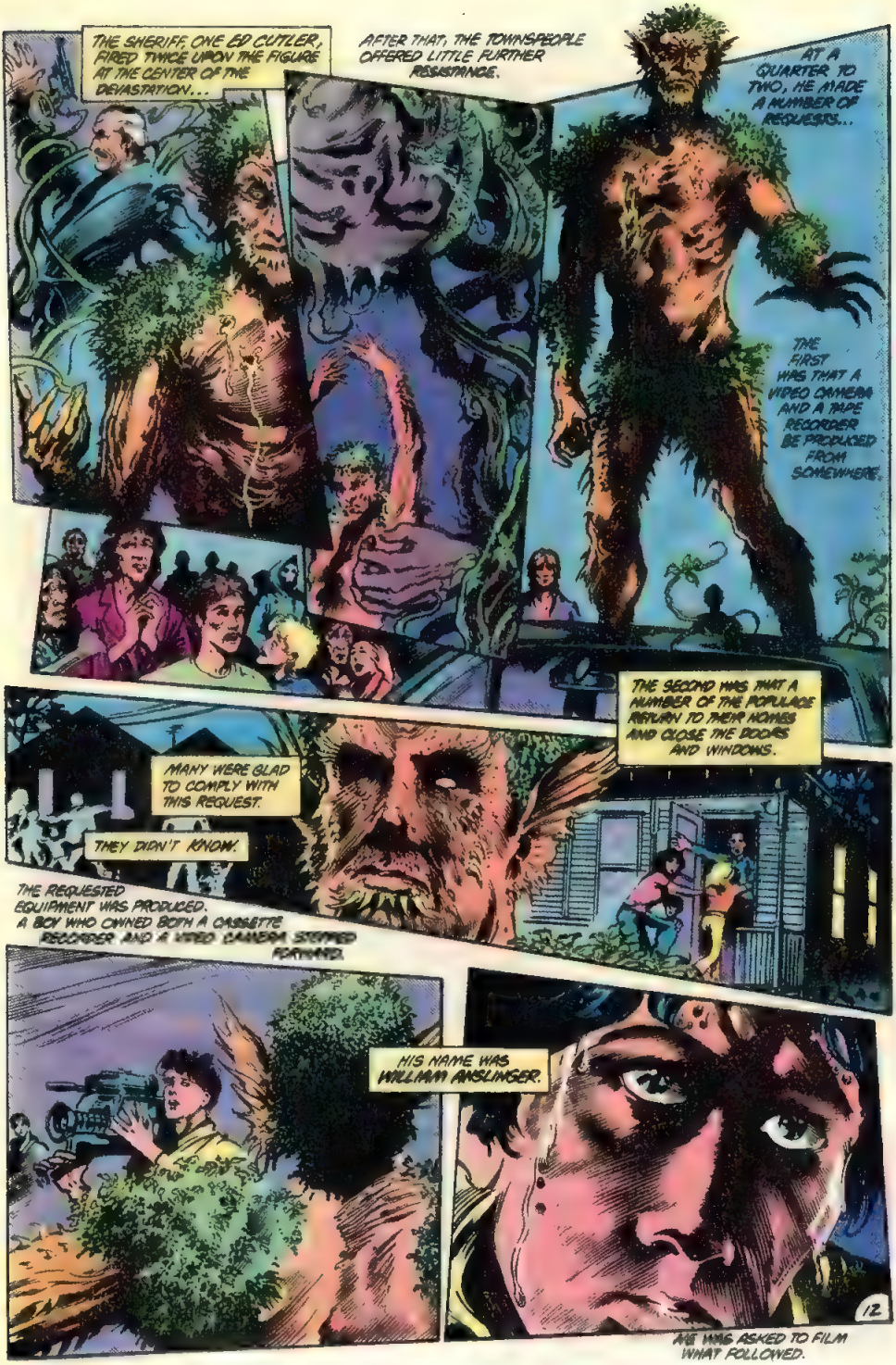

THERE... SOMETHING COLD AND UGLY... BRUSHING AGAINST ME... BLACK IMAGES CONGEALING LIKE TAR...
THERE IS THE CREAKING OF BOUGHS... AN ADIDAS SNEAKER TWIRLING IN THE HOT BREEZE...
THERE IS SOMETHING... SOMETHING THAT WALKS THE DESERTED NIGHT ROADS TOWARD THE SLEEPING TOWNS...
...SOMETHING THAT RUSTLES...
THERE IS ANOTHER MIND IN THE GREEN.
A RED MIND.
IT CRAWLS.
IT CRAWLS LIKE CANCER ...PAINTING EVERYTHING WITH THE STICKY DARKNESS OF OLD BLOOD...
I FEEL A NAME... WOOD-RUE?
WOODRUE.
WHO IS WOODRUE? DID I KNOW HIM ONCE, BACK IN THE RED WORLD?
I FORGET. I FORGET SO MUCH...
I REMEMBER A MAN... A MAN WHO DRANK. WHAT WAS HIS NAME? NOT WOODRUE...
HE HAD A WIFE... A BEAUTIFUL WIFE... WHITE HAIR LIKE AN AVALANCHE...
A-BI-GAIL? YES...
HOLLAND TUNNEL

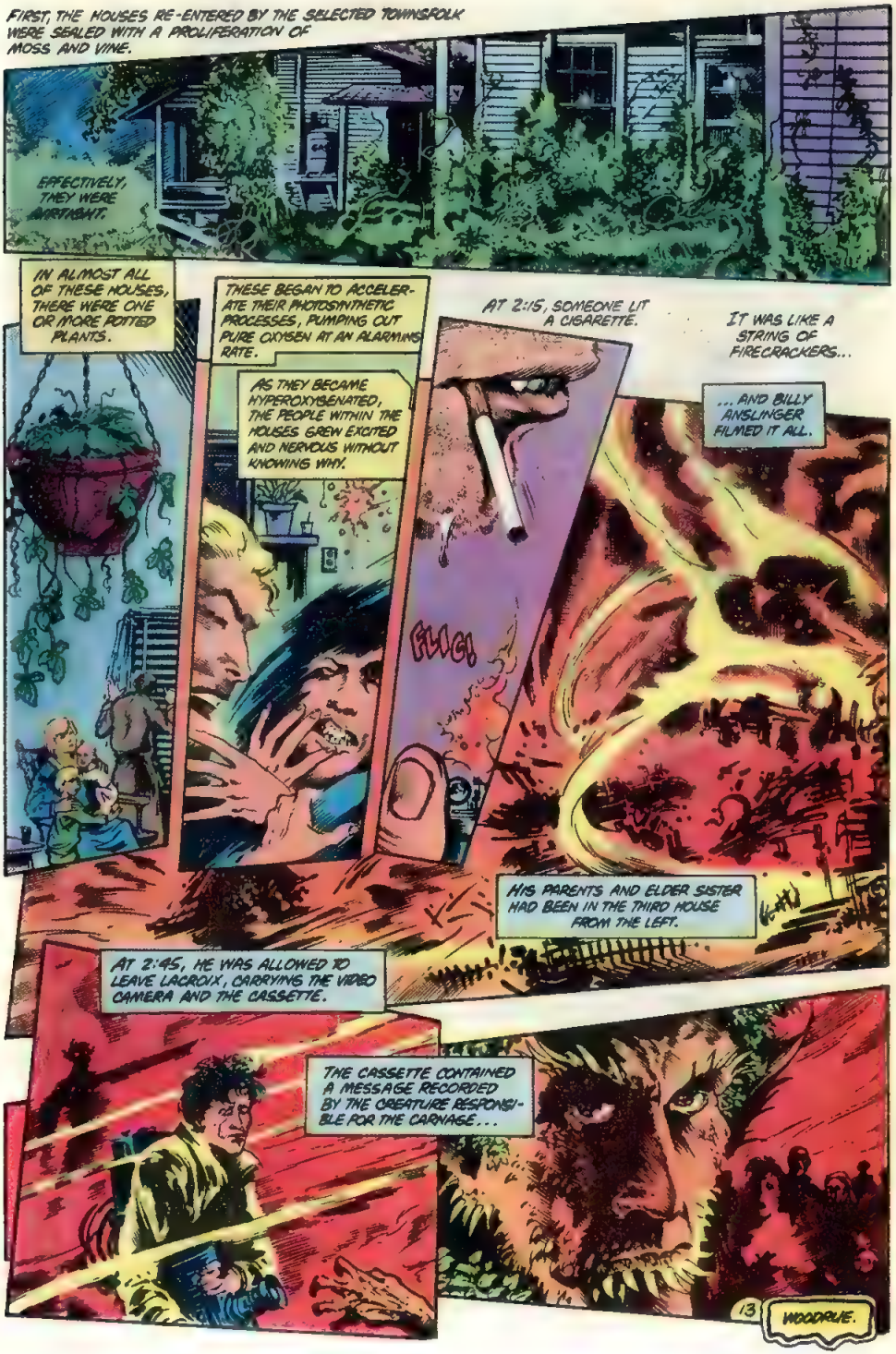

ABIGAIL.
SHE'S OUT ON HER OWN AGAIN. OUT ON HER OWN AFTER DARK.
IT'S THE SILENCE. WHEN THERE'S TROUBLE, SHE NEEDS SILENCE.
SHE'S BEEN ON HER OWN A LOT LATELY. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE SHE NEEDED THE SILENCE SO MUCH.
SHLUNK
SINCE SHE WAS A KID, IN FACT, UP IN THE BALKANS. NONE OF THE OTHER CHILDREN LIKED HER. IT WAS THE WHITE HAIR...
THEY'D SEE HER WALKING ALONE AND THEY'D CALL AFTER HER.
CRAZY ABBY.
CRAZY ABBY.
CRAZY ABBY.
SHE WASN'T CRAZY THEN. SHE ISN'T CRAZY NOW.
IT'S JUST THAT SHE'S FRIGHTENED OF HER HUSBAND. IT'S JUST THAT HER BEST FRIEND HAS GIVEN UP ON BEING HUMAN AND TURNED INTO PART OF THE SHRUBBERY.
IT'S JUST THAT SOMETIMES.
WELL, SOMETIMES SHE IMAGINES THINGS.
TERRIBLE THINGS.
8
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

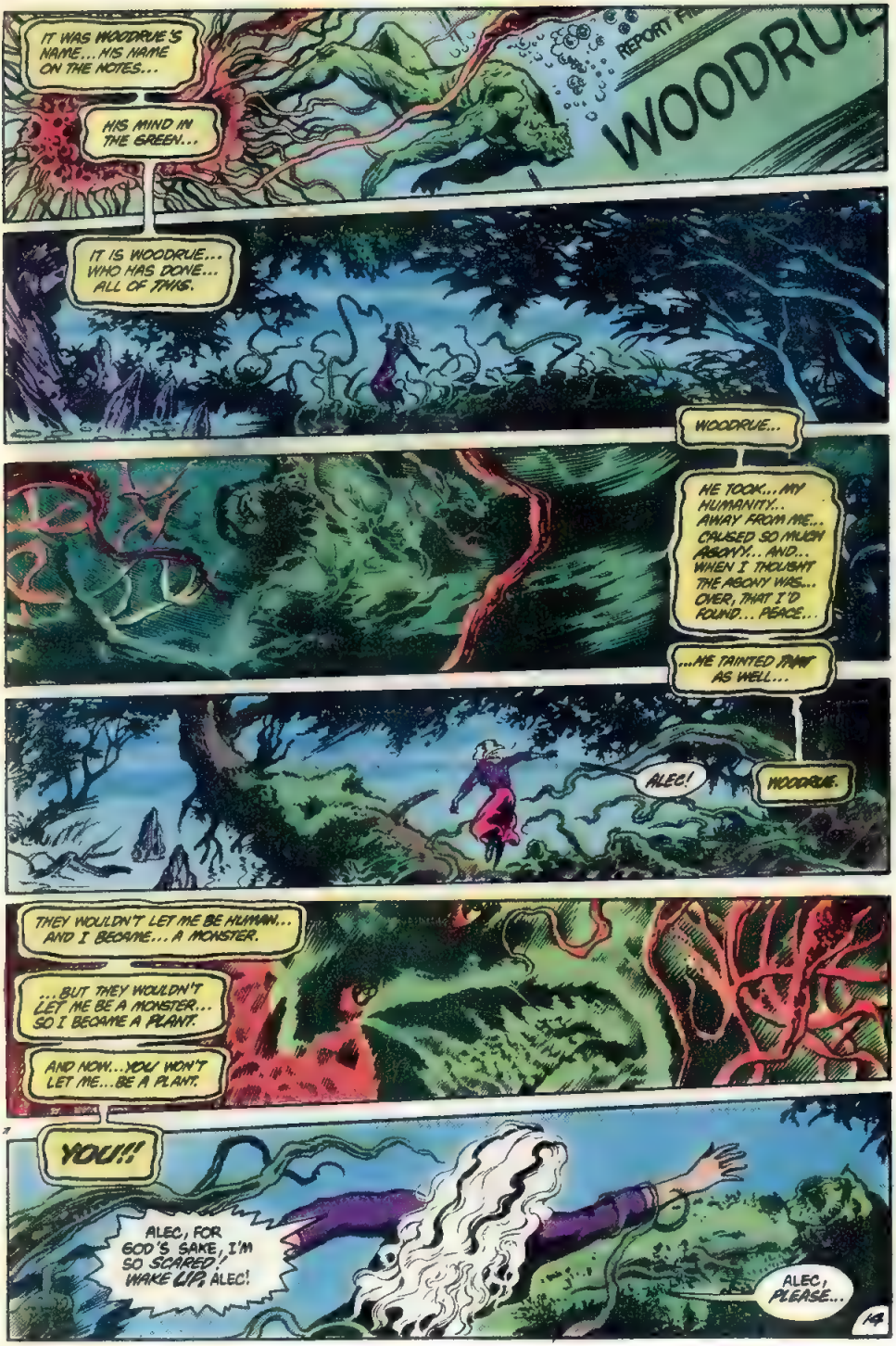
FOR INSTANCE... SOMETIMES SHE IMAGINES THAT SHE'S BEING WATCHED. THAT SHE'S SURROUNDED BY SOMETHING ALIEN AND HOSTILE.
WE CALL THIS PARANOIA.
PARANOIA ISN'T SO BAD, UNLESS OF COURSE IT'S REALLY PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIA.
PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIA IS PRETTY BAD. SOMETIMES YOU SEE VISIONS...
THINGS THAT CAN'T POSSIBLY BE HAPPENING.
GOOD OLD CRAZY ABBY.
OF COURSE, THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO REMEMBER NOT TO START SCREAMING, IN CASE YOU FIND THAT YOU ARE UNABLE TO STOP.
TRY TO CONFRONT YOUR FEARS. TRY NOT TO RUN AWAY FROM THEM.
AND, IF ALL ELSE FAILS...
...CALL A FRIEND.
ALEC!

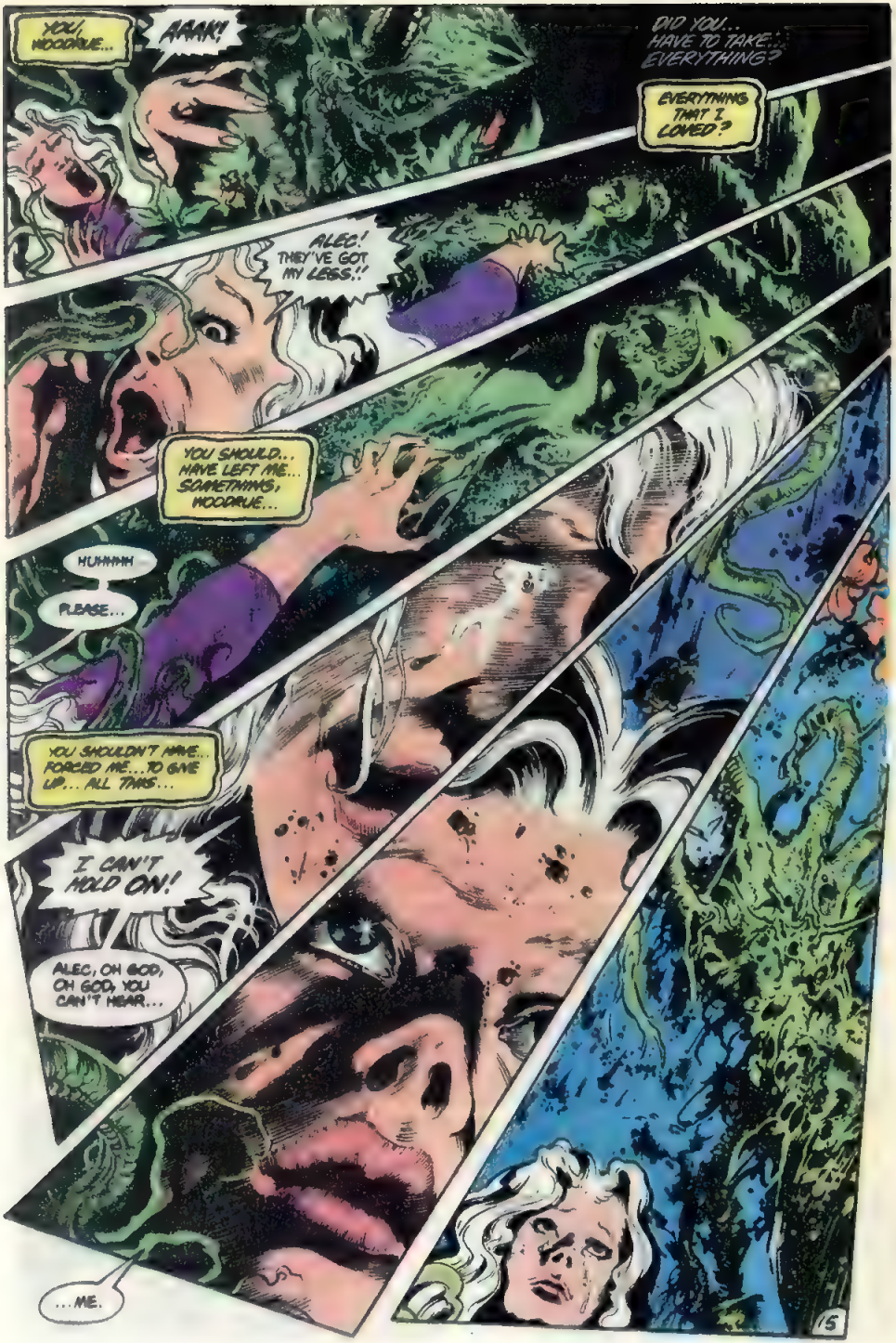

ALEC.
I KNEW AN ALEC ONCE... WAS THAT WOODRUE? ALEC WOODRUE?
NO.
ALEC... HOLLAND! OF COURSE! AND ALEC HOLLAND...
ALEC HOLLAND.. WAS ME!
NO.
NO, ME WASN'T.
THAT WAS THE TROUBLE, WASN'T IT? I THOUGHT I WAS ALEC HOLLAND, BUT I LEARNED DIFFERENTLY...
THAT'S HOW I CAME TO BE... HERE.
HOW DID IT HAPPEN? I REMEMBER BEING SHOT...
...AND THEN WAKING UP, COLD AND WET, IN... THE SUNDERLAND BUILDING.
...WAS THAT THE NAME? SUNDERLAND?
I FOLLOWED THE SIGNS TO SOME SORT OF MAIN CITY. THERE WERE SOME NOTES THERE.
NOTES ABOUT ME. AND I READ THEM. AND THEY TOLD ME EVERYTHING.
DR. JASON WOODRUE
AND THE AUTHOR'S NAME WAS... THE AUTHOR'S NAME WAS...
10

WOODRUE.
HE REACHED LACROIX AT 1:32 A.M.
LACROIX (POP. 539), IS A SMALL TOWN FOUR MILES SOUTH OF THIBODAUX. THE DESTRUCTION BEGAN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.
THE POLICE HOUSE WAS FIRST...
...AND THEN THE SCHOOL...
...AND THEN THE CHURCH.
BY 1:38, MOST OF THE POPULATION WAS OUT ON THE STREETS.
FROM THEN ON, THINGS GOT WORSE...


THE SHERIFF, ONE ED CUTLER, FIRED TWICE UPON THE FIGURE AT THE CENTER OF THE DEVASTATION...
AFTER THAT, THE TOWNSPEOPLE OFFERED LITTLE FURTHER RESISTANCE.
AT A QUARTER TO TWO, HE MADE A NUMBER OF REQUESTS...
THE FIRST WAS THAT A VIDEO CAMERA AND A TAPE RECORDER BE PRODUCED FROM SOMEWHERE.
THE SECOND WAS THAT A NUMBER OF THE POPULACE RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND CLOSE THE DOORS AND WINDOWS.
MANY WERE GLAD TO COMPLY WITH THIS REQUEST.
THEY DIDN'T KNOW.
THE REQUESTED EQUIPMENT WAS PRODUCED. A BOY WHO OWNED BOTH A CASSETTE RECORDER AND A VIDEO CAMERA STEPPED FORWARD.
HIS NAME WAS WILLIAM ANSLINGER.
12
HE WAS ASKED TO FILM WHAT FOLLOWED.


FIRST, THE HOUSES RE-ENTERED BY THE SELECTED TOWNSFOLK WERE SEALED WITH A PROLIFERATION OF MOSS AND VINE.
EFFECTIVELY, THEY WERE AIRTIGHT.
IN ALMOST ALL OF THESE HOUSES, THERE WERE ONE OR MORE POTTED PLANTS.
THESE BEGAN TO ACCELERATE THEIR PHOTOSYNTHETIC PROCESSES, PUMPING OUT PURE OXYGEN AT AN ALARMING RATE.
AS THEY BECAME HYPEROXYGENATED, THE PEOPLE WITHIN THE HOUSES GREW EXCITED AND NERVOUS WITHOUT KNOWING WHY.
AT 2:15, SOMEONE LIT A CIGARETTE.
FLIC!
IT WAS LIKE A STRING OF FIRECRACKERS...
...AND BILLY ANSLINGER FILMED IT ALL.
HIS PARENTS AND ELDER SISTER HAD BEEN IN THE THIRD HOUSE FROM THE LEFT.
AT 2:45, HE WAS ALLOWED TO LEAVE LACROIX, CARRYING THE VIDEO CAMERA AND THE CASSETTE.
THE CASSETTE CONTAINED A MESSAGE RECORDED BY THE CREATURE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARNAGE...
13
WOODRUE.


IT WAS WOODRUE'S NAME... HIS NAME ON THE NOTES...
HIS MIND IN THE GREEN...
REPORT FR
WOODRUE
IT IS WOODRUE... WHO HAS DONE... ALL OF THIS.
WOODRUE...
HE TOOK... MY HUMANITY.. AWAY FROM ME... CAUSED SO MUCH AGONY... AND... WHEN I THOUGHT THE AGONY WAS... OVER, THAT I'D FOUND... PEACE..
...HE TAINTED THAT AS WELL...
ALEC!
WOODRUE.
THEY WOULDN'T LET ME BE HUMAN... AND I BECAME... A MONSTER.
...BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ME BE A MONSTER... SO I BECAME A PLANT.
AND NOW... YOU WON'T LET ME... BE A PLANT.
YOU!!
ALEC, FOR GOD'S SAKE, I'M SO SCARED! WAKE UP, ALEC!
ALEC, PLEASE...
14


YOU, MOODRUE...
AAAK!
DID YOU... HAVE TO TAKE... EVERYTHING?
EVERYTHING THAT I LOVED?
ALEC! THEY'VE GOT MY LEGS!!
YOU SHOULD... HAVE LEFT ME... SOMETHING, MOODRUE...
HUHHHH
PLEASE...
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE... FORCED ME... TO GIVE UP... ALL THIS...
I CAN'T HOLD ON!
ALEC, OH GOD, OH GOD, YOU CAN'T HEAR...
...ME.
15

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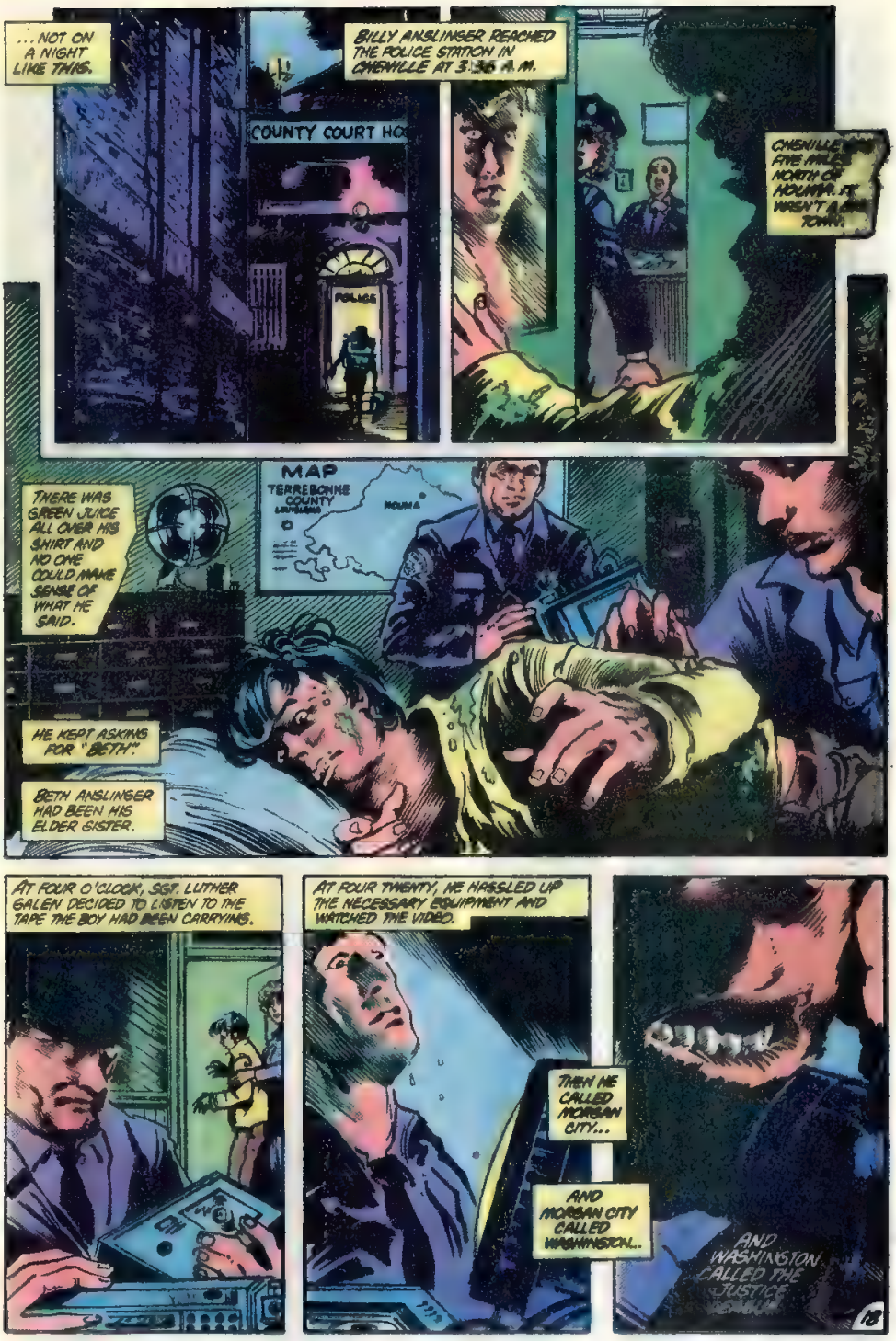
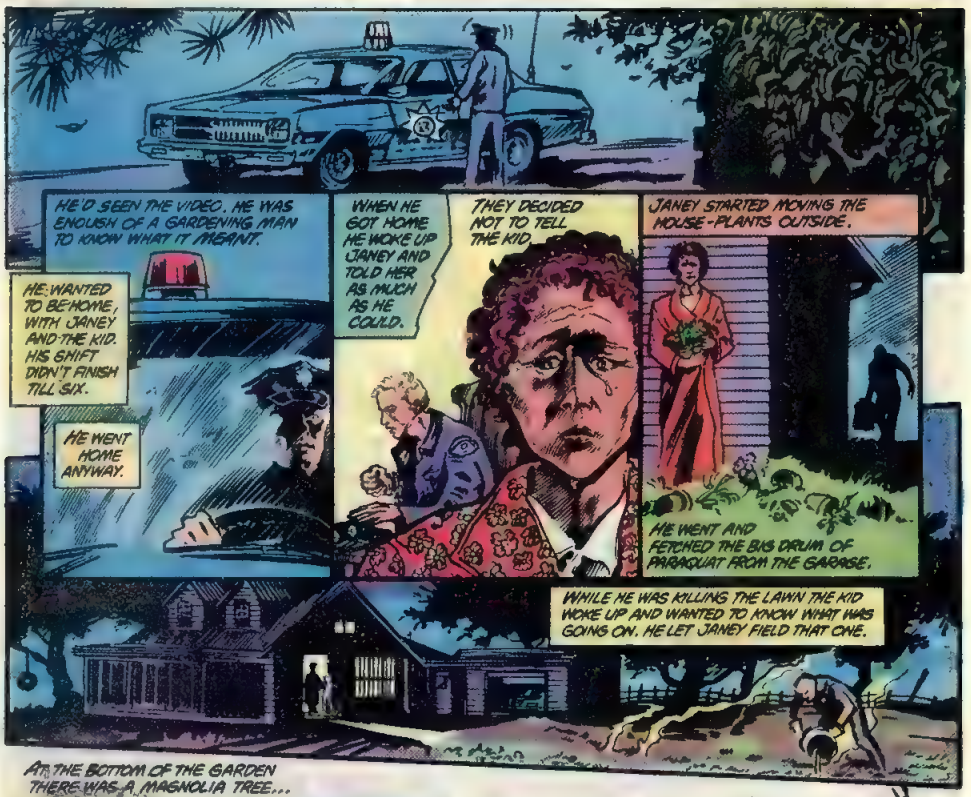
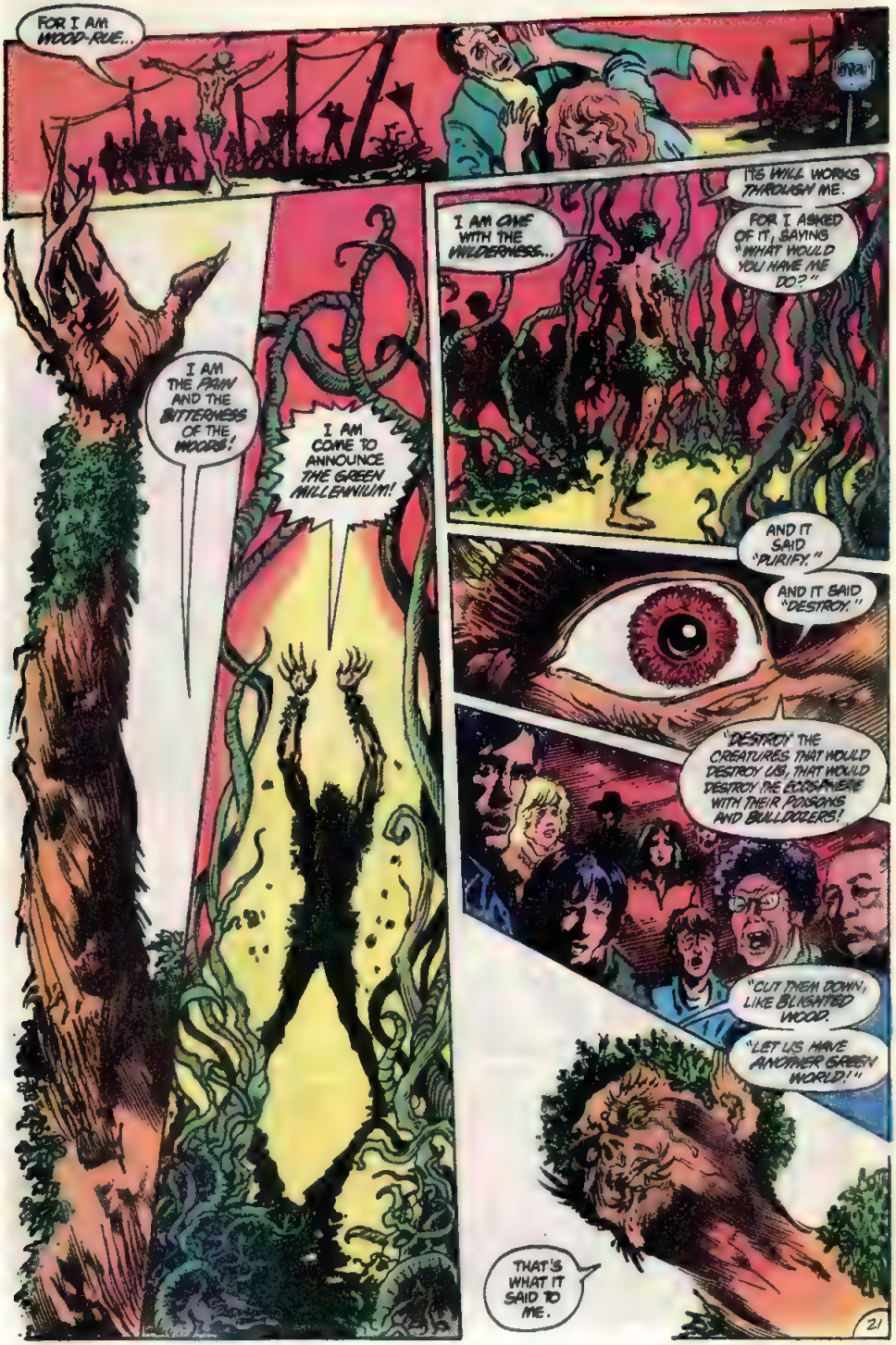

...NOT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS.
BILLY ANSLINGER REACHED THE POLICE STATION IN CHENVILLE AT 3:36 A.M.
COUNTY COURT HO
POLICE
CHENVILLE WAS FIVE MILES NORTH OF HOUMA. IT WASN'T A BIG TOWN.
MAP
TERREBONNE COUNTY
LOUISIANA
HOUMA
THERE WAS GREEN JUICE ALL OVER HIS SHIRT AND NO ONE COULD MAKE SENSE OF WHAT HE SAID.
HE KEPT ASKING FOR "BETH."
BETH ANSLINGER HAD BEEN HIS ELDER SISTER.
AT FOUR O'CLOCK, SGT. LUTHER GALEN DECIDED TO LISTEN TO THE TAPE THE BOY HAD BEEN CARRYING.
AT FOUR TWENTY, HE HASSLED UP THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND WATCHED THE VIDEO.
THEN HE CALLED MORGAN CITY...
AND MORGAN CITY CALLED WASHINGTON...
AND WASHINGTON CALLED THE JUSTICE
18


AT 4:45 A.M., AFTER MAKING SURE THAT BILLY ANSLINGER WAS SAFE IN MORGAN CITY HOSPITAL, LUTHER GALEN WENT HOME.
HE'D SEEN THE VIDEO. HE WAS ENOUGH OF A GARDENING MAN TO KNOW WHAT IT MEANT.
HE WANTED TO BE HOME, WITH JANEY AND THE KID. HIS SHIFT DIDN'T FINISH TILL SIX.
HE WENT HOME ANYWAY.
WHEN HE GOT HOME HE WOKE UP JANEY AND TOLD HER AS MUCH AS HE COULD.
THEY DECIDED NOT TO TELL THE KID.
JANEY STARTED MOVING THE HOUSE-PLANTS OUTSIDE.
HE WENT AND FETCHED THE BIG DRUM OF PARAQUAT FROM THE GARAGE.
WHILE HE WAS KILLING THE LAWN THE KID WOKE UP AND WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. HE LET JANEY FIELD THAT ONE.
AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GARDEN THERE WAS A MAGNOLIA TREE...
JANEY HAD PLANTED IT WHEN THEY MOVED INTO THE HOUSE, TWENTY YEARS AGO. IT WAS A GOOD OLD TREE...
LUTHER + JANEY
STEVE HAD BUILT A TREE HOUSE IN IT, SUMMER BEFORE LAST.
LUTHER GALEN WASN'T A YOUNG MAN.
THE JOB TOOK A LONG TIME.

IN FACT, IT SEEMED TO GO ON FOREVER.
STOP
NO MORE.
PLEASE.
NO MORE?
NO MORE?!
DID YOU SAY "NO MORE" WHEN YOU AND YOUR FELLOW HAMBURGERS WERE STRIPPING THE LAND BARE??
WHEN THEY DIPPED THEIR CHAINSAWS INTO THE TENDER FLESH OF MY PEOPLE?
DID YOU SAY "NO MORE" THEN??
THERE WILL BE MORE.
...UNNNNUH...
SKLASH
LOTS MORE.


FOR I AM WOOD-RUE...
I AM THE PAIN AND THE BITTERNESS OF THE WOODS!
I AM COME TO ANNOUNCE THE GREEN MILLENNIUM!
I AM ONE WITH THE WILDERNESS...
IT IS WILL WORKS THROUGH ME.
FOR I ASKED OF IT, SAYING "WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?"
AND IT SAID "PURIFY."
AND IT SAID "DESTROY."
"DESTROY" THE CREATURES THAT WOULD DESTROY US, THAT WOULD DESTROY THE ECOSPHERE WITH THEIR POISONS AND BULLDOZERS!
"CUT THEM DOWN, LIKE BLIGHTED WOOD.
"LET US HAVE ANOTHER GREEN WORLD!"
THAT'S WHAT IT SAID TO ME.

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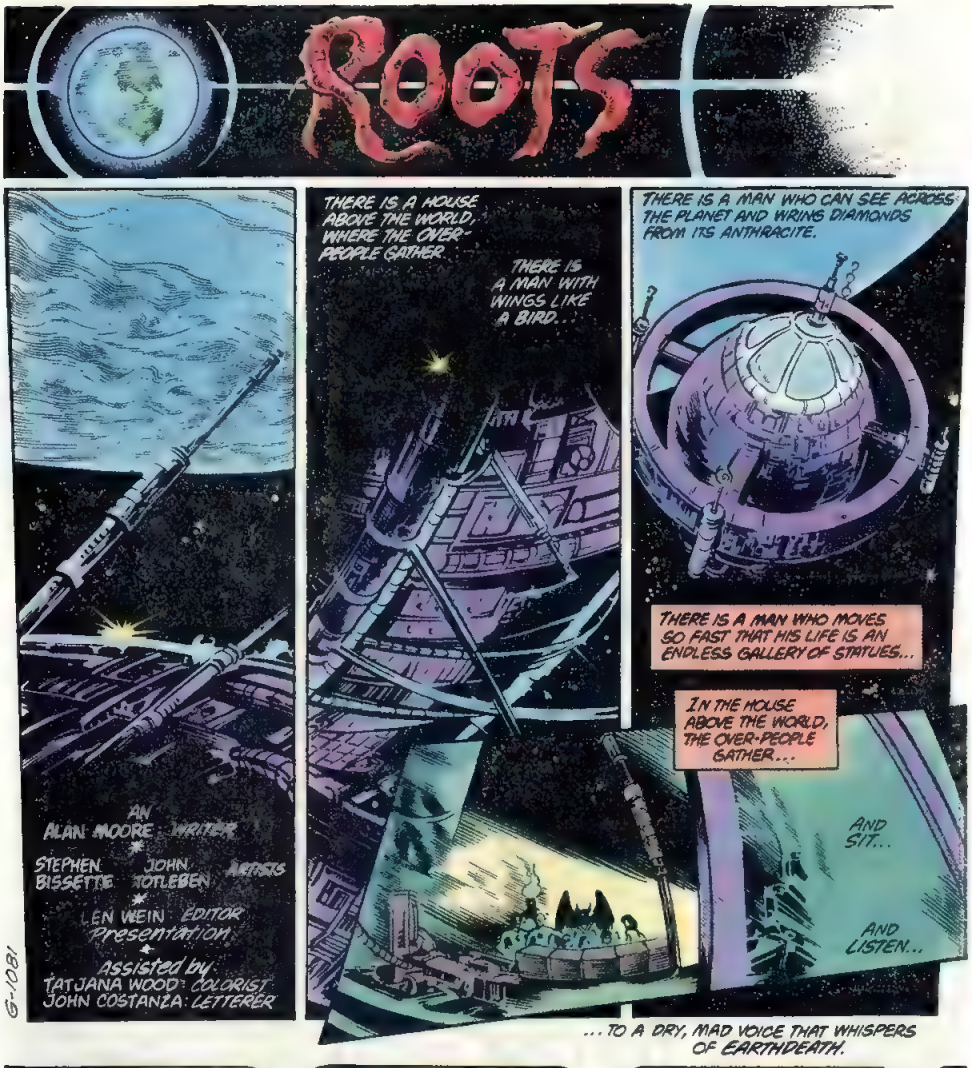
"ANOTHER GREEN WORLD, AS THERE WAS AT THE BEGINNING, BEFORE THE BEASTS CRAWLED UP OUT OF THE OCEANS..."
"THOSE LONG, GREEN CENTURIES..."
"... WHERE NO BIRD SANG..."
"...WHERE NO DOG BARKED..."
WHERE THERE WAS NO NOISE!
WHERE THERE WAS NO SCREAMING MEAT!!
FOR I AM THE REGRET AND ANGER OF THE FORESTS...
I...
ANGIE!
WOODRUE...

NEXT:

ROOT

THE SAGA of THE
SWAMP THING
24
75¢
CAN 95¢
U.K. 30p
MAY 84
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ENTER: THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA!
THE NEW DC.
THERE'S NO
STOPPING US NOW.


ROOTS
AN ALAN MOORE WRITER
STEPHEN BISSETTE JOHN TOTLEBEN ARTISTS
LEN WEIN EDITOR
Presentation
Assisted by:
TATJANA WOOD: COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA: LETTERER
G-10/81
THERE IS A HOUSE ABOVE THE WORLD, WHERE THE OVER-PEOPLE GATHER.
THERE IS A MAN WITH WINGS LIKE A BIRD...
THERE IS A MAN WHO CAN SEE ACROSS THE PLANET AND WRING DIAMONDS FROM ITS ANTHRACITE.
THERE IS A MAN WHO MOVES SO FAST THAT HIS LIFE IS AN ENDLESS GALLERY OF STATUES...
IN THE HOUSE ABOVE THE WORLD, THE OVER-PEOPLE GATHER...
AND SIT...
AND LISTEN...
...TO A DRY, MAD VOICE THAT WHISPERS OF EARTHDEATH.
THERE IS NOTHING THAT YOU CAN DO.
IT IS THE DAY.

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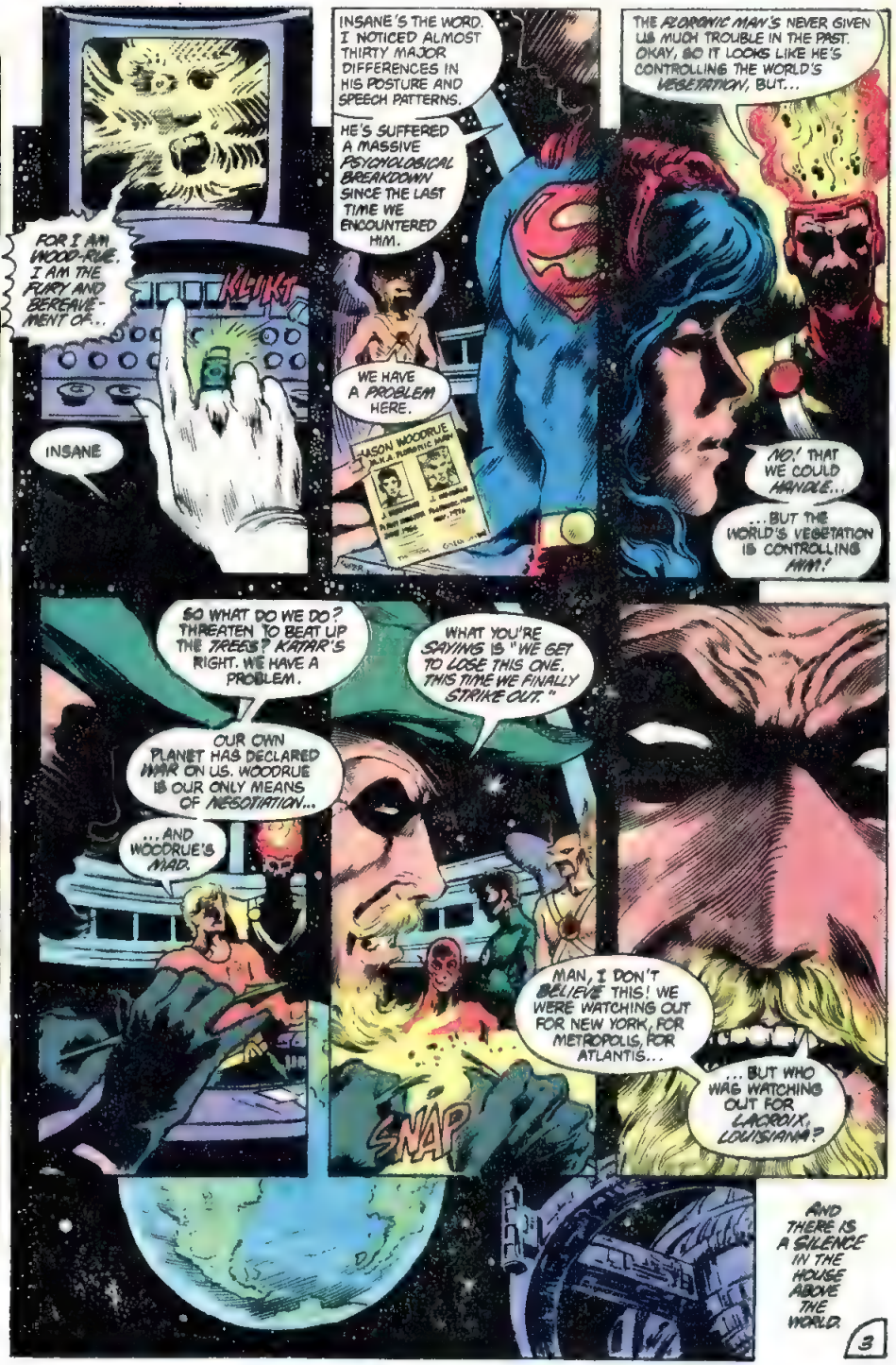
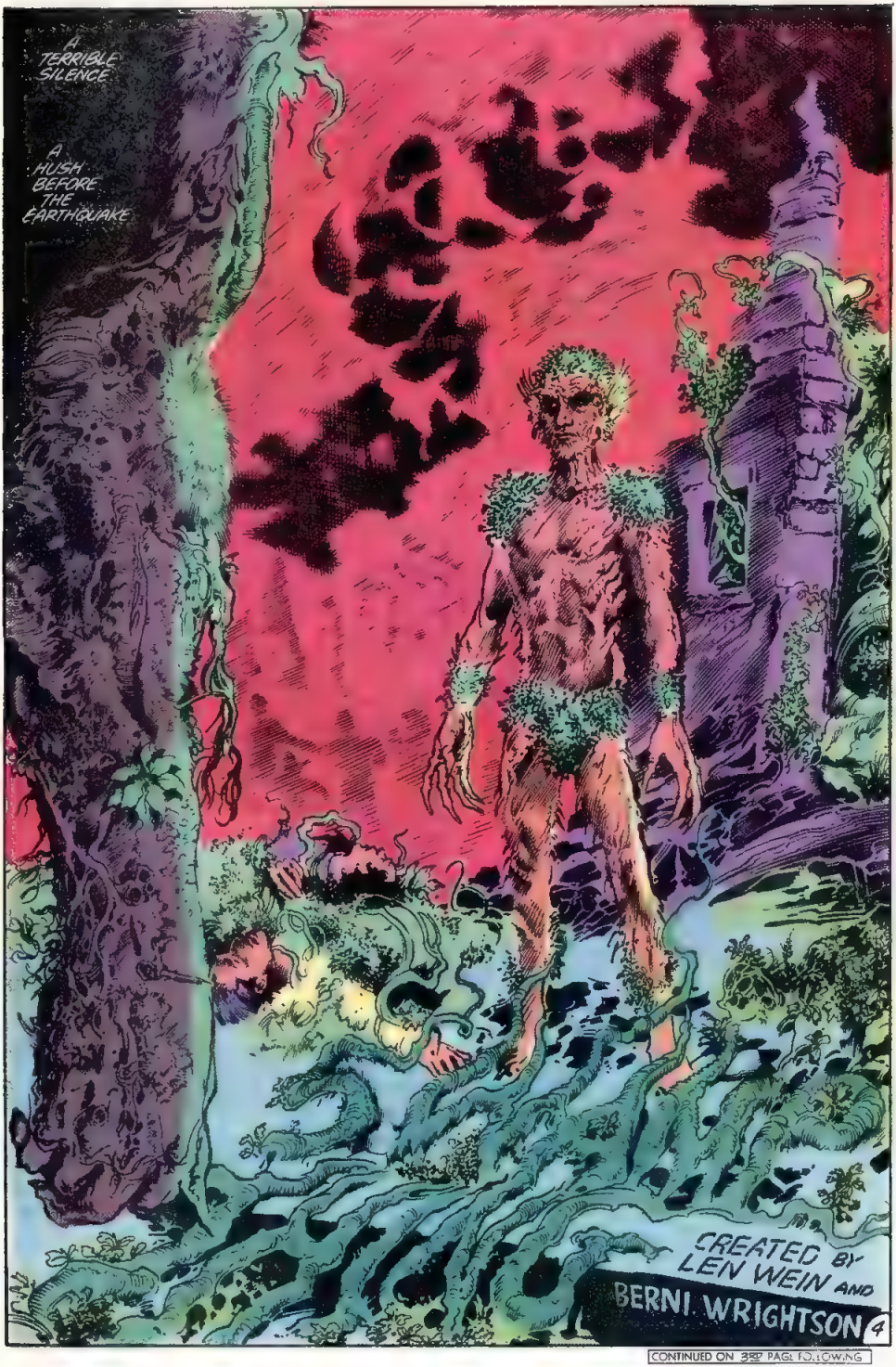
FOR I AM WOOD-RUE, GRIEF AND RAGE OF THE WILDERNESS..
AND THE VELDT SPEAKS THROUGH ME, AND THROUGH ME IS THE WILL OF THE JUNGLE KNOWN.
SEE...
...SEE THE REVENSE OF THE GRASS!
OH LORD...
YOU HAVE WAGED BITTER AND UNDECLARED WAR UPON THE GREEN, GUTTING THE RAIN FORESTS, MILE AFTER MILE, DAY AFTER DAY...
...BUT KNOW THIS: THE WAR HAS COME HOME!
IT IS MAN'S TURN TO EMBRACE THE SCYTHE...
IF ALLOWED TO LIVE, YOU WILL KILL YOUR PLANET. YOU MUST BE REMOVED.
FROM TWO O'CLOCK THIS MORNING, THE WORLD'S PLANT LIFE INCREASED ITS PRODUCTION OF OXYGEN TENFOLD...
OXYGEN? WHAT...?
SHHHH.
THE FIRST TO DIE WILL BE THE VERY YOUNG AND THE VERY OLD... THE SAPLINGS AND THE STUMPS.
THOSE THAT SURVIVE WILL LIVE IN AN ATMOSPHERE SO INFLAMMABLE THAT ANY FLAME, ANY SPARK, WILL UNLEASH AN INFERNO.
YOU WILL REGRESS TO THE STONE AGE, AND BEYOND.
WITHIN A YEAR, YOU WILL ALL BE DEAD. THERE IS NOTHING THAT YOU CAN DO.
IT IS THE DAY.
2


FOR I AM WOOD-RUE. I AM THE FURY AND BEREAVEMENT OF...
KLUKT
INSANE
INSANE'S THE WORD. I NOTICED ALMOST THIRTY MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN HIS POSTURE AND SPEECH PATTERNS.
HE'S SUFFERED A MASSIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN SINCE THE LAST TIME WE ENCOUNTERED HIM.
WE HAVE A PROBLEM HERE.
JASON WOODRUE A.K.A. Plutonic Man
THE FLORONIC MAN'S NEVER GIVEN US MUCH TROUBLE IN THE PAST. OKAY, SO IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S CONTROLLING THE WORLD'S VEGETATION, BUT...
NO! THAT WE COULD HANDLE...
...BUT THE WORLD'S VEGETATION IS CONTROLLING MAN!
SO WHAT DO WE DO? THREATEN TO BEAT UP THE TREES? KATAR'S RIGHT. WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
OUR OWN PLANET HAS DECLARED WAR ON US. WOODRUE IS OUR ONLY MEANS OF NEGOTIATION...
...AND WOODRUE'S MAD.
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS "WE GET TO LOSE THIS ONE. THIS TIME WE FINALLY STRIKE OUT."
SNAP
MAN, I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! WE WERE WATCHING OUT FOR NEW YORK, FOR METROPOLIS, FOR ATLANTIS...
...BUT WHO WAS WATCHING OUT FOR LACROIX, LOUISIANA?
AND THERE IS A SILENCE IN THE HOUSE ABOVE THE WORLD.
3



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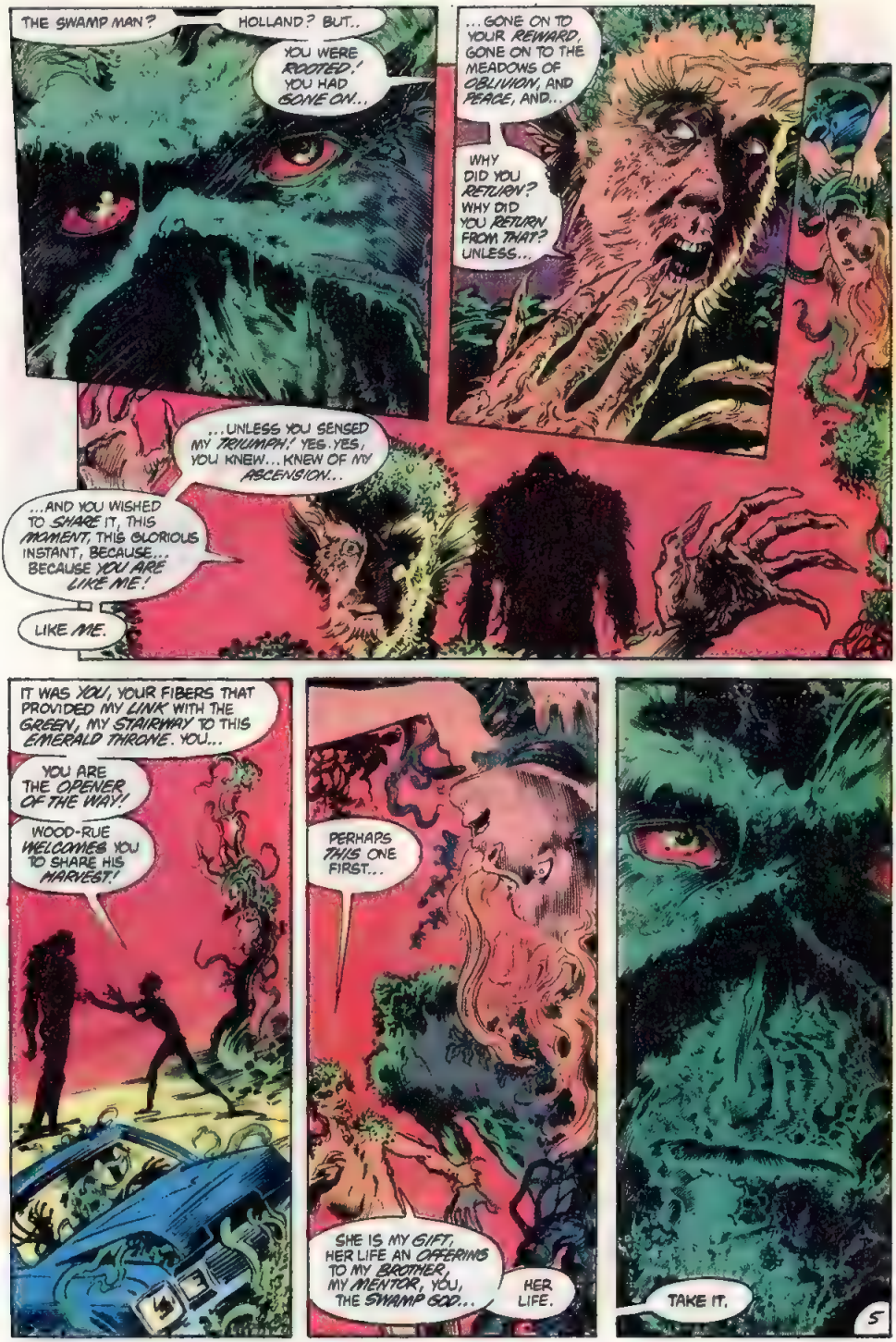
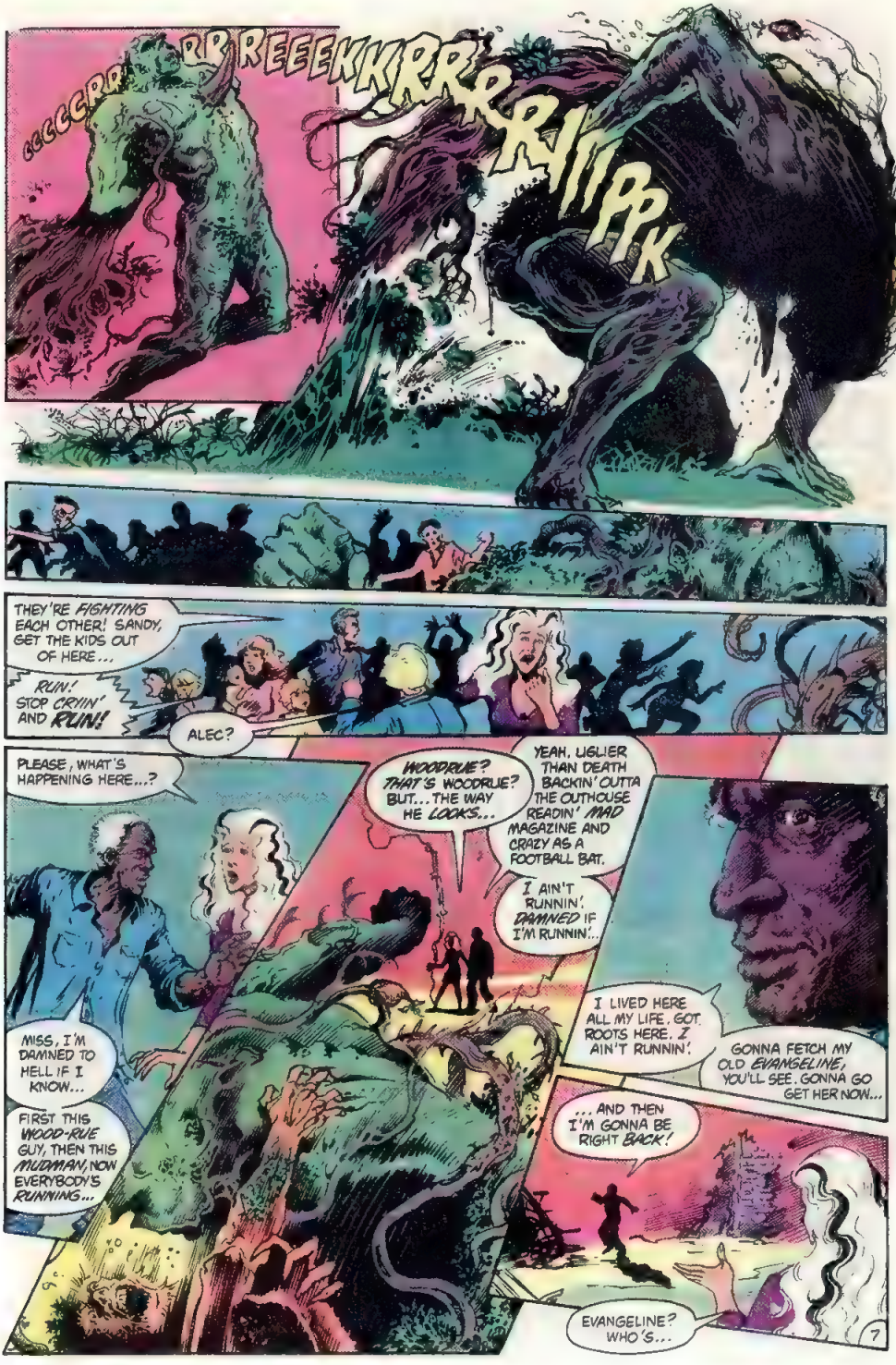
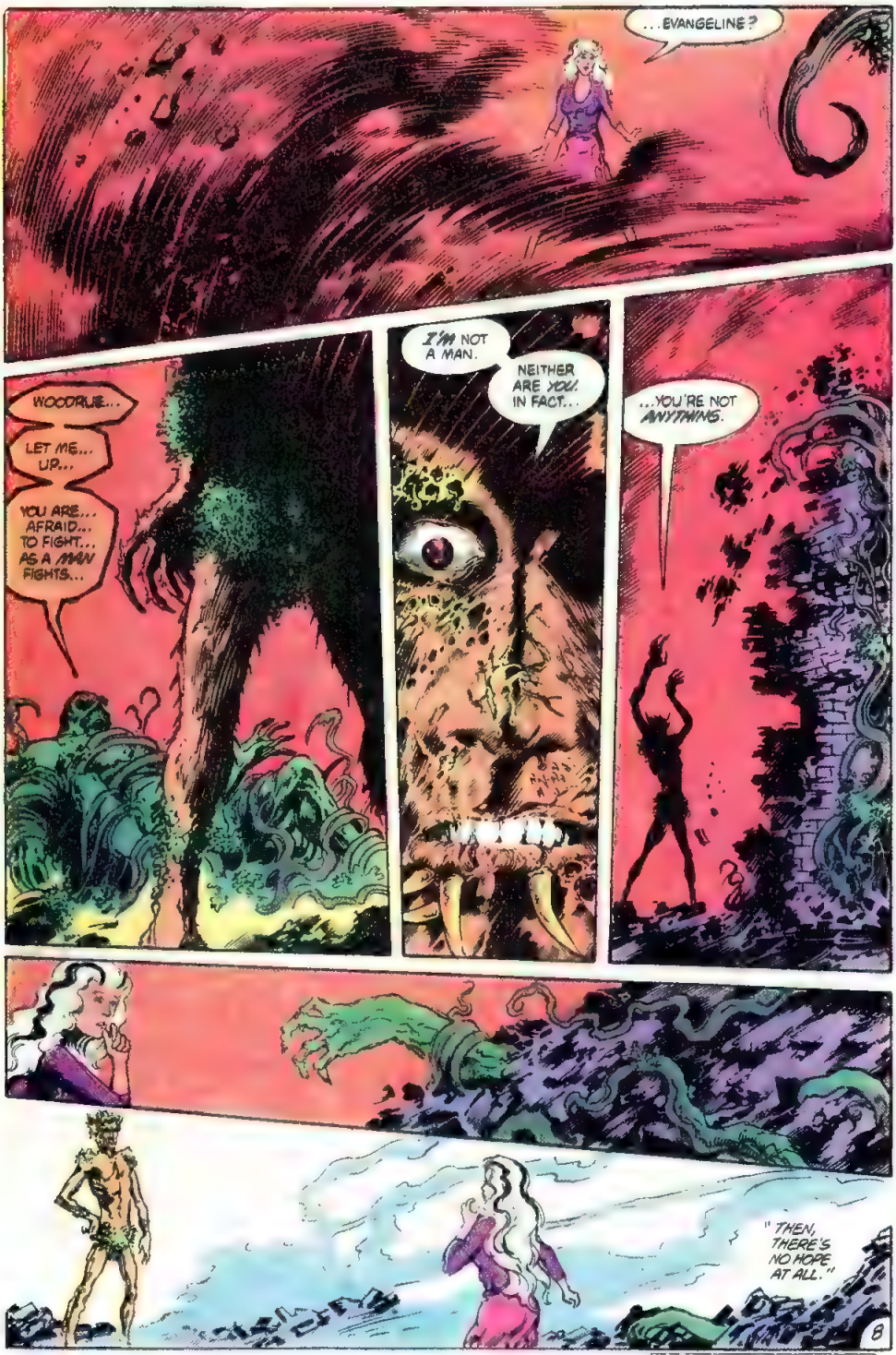

THE SWAMP MAN?
HOLLAND? BUT..
YOU WERE ROOTED! YOU HAD GONE ON...
...GONE ON TO YOUR REWARD, GONE ON TO THE MEADOWS OF OBLIVION, AND PEACE, AND...
WHY DID YOU RETURN? WHY DID YOU RETURN FROM THAT? UNLESS...
...UNLESS YOU SENSED MY TRIUMPH! YES..YES, YOU KNEW... KNEW OF MY ASCENSION...
...AND YOU WISHED TO SHARE IT, THIS MOMENT, THIS GLORIOUS INSTANT, BECAUSE... BECAUSE YOU ARE LIKE ME!
LIKE ME.
IT WAS YOU, YOUR FIBERS THAT PROVIDED MY LINK WITH THE GREEN, MY STAIRWAY TO THIS EMERALD THRONE. YOU...
YOU ARE THE OPENER OF THE WAY!
WOOD-RUE WELCOMES YOU TO SHARE HIS HARVEST!
PERHAPS THIS ONE FIRST...
SHE IS MY GIFT, HER LIFE AN OFFERING TO MY BROTHER, MY MENTOR, YOU, THE SWAMP GOD...
HER LIFE.
TAKE IT.
5

SPLAK
TRAITOR.
SKLUTCH!


AGGGGRR
RRREEEKKRRRRIIPPK
THEY'RE FIGHTING EACH OTHER! SANDY, GET THE KIDS OUT OF HERE...
RUN! STOP CRYIN' AND RUN!
ALEC?
PLEASE, WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE...?
WOODRUE? THAT'S WOODRUE? BUT... THE WAY HE LOOKS...
YEAH, UGLIER THAN DEATH BACKIN' OUTTA THE OUTHOUSE READIN' MAD MAGAZINE AND CRAZY AS A FOOTBALL BAT.
I AIN'T RUNNIN'. DAMNED IF I'M RUNNIN'...
I LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE. GOT ROOTS HERE. I AIN'T RUNNIN'.
GONNA FETCH MY OLD EVANGELINE, YOU'LL SEE. GONNA GO GET HER NOW...
MISS, I'M DAMNED TO HELL IF I KNOW...
FIRST THIS WOOD-RUE GUY, THEN THIS MUDMAN, NOW EVERYBODY'S RUNNING...
...AND THEN I'M GONNA BE RIGHT BACK!
EVANGELINE? WHO'S...
7



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THERE'S *ALWAYS* HOPE.

HAL, COULD YOU CONTACT *OA*? SOME OF THE *CORPS* ARE VEGETABLE LIFE FORMS...

ALIEN VEGETABLES. THEY'D HAVE THE SAME COMMUNICATION PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE. MAYBE MORE SO.

HMMM. WHAT ABOUT THE *UNDERSEA* SITUATION?

NOT AS SERIOUS YET AS ON LAND, BUT IT'S GETTING *WORSE*.

LISTEN, WAIT A MINUTE...

DATA: WOODRUE, J.
POINT OF ORIGIN PARALLEL DIMENSION INHABITED BY PLANT ELEMENTALS. WOODRUE BANISHED TO EARTH A.D. 1962
RECREATES SELF CHEMICALLY TO "FLORONIC MAN" A.D. 1976

OCEANS

THE PROBLEM'S WITH THE *OXYGEN BALANCE*, RIGHT? SO WHY DON'T I...

... USE YOUR ATOMIC RESTRUCTURING ABILITIES TO CONVERT OXYGEN MOLECULES INTO CARBON DIOXIDE AND *RESTORE* THE BALANCE?

YES, I'D THOUGHT OF THAT. IT WOULDN'T *WORK*.

FOR ONE THING, DO YOU KNOW HOW *MANY* MOLECULES MAKE UP EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE? IF YOU WANTED, I COULD *COUNT* THEM...

UH, YEAH, WELL, DON'T BOTHER...

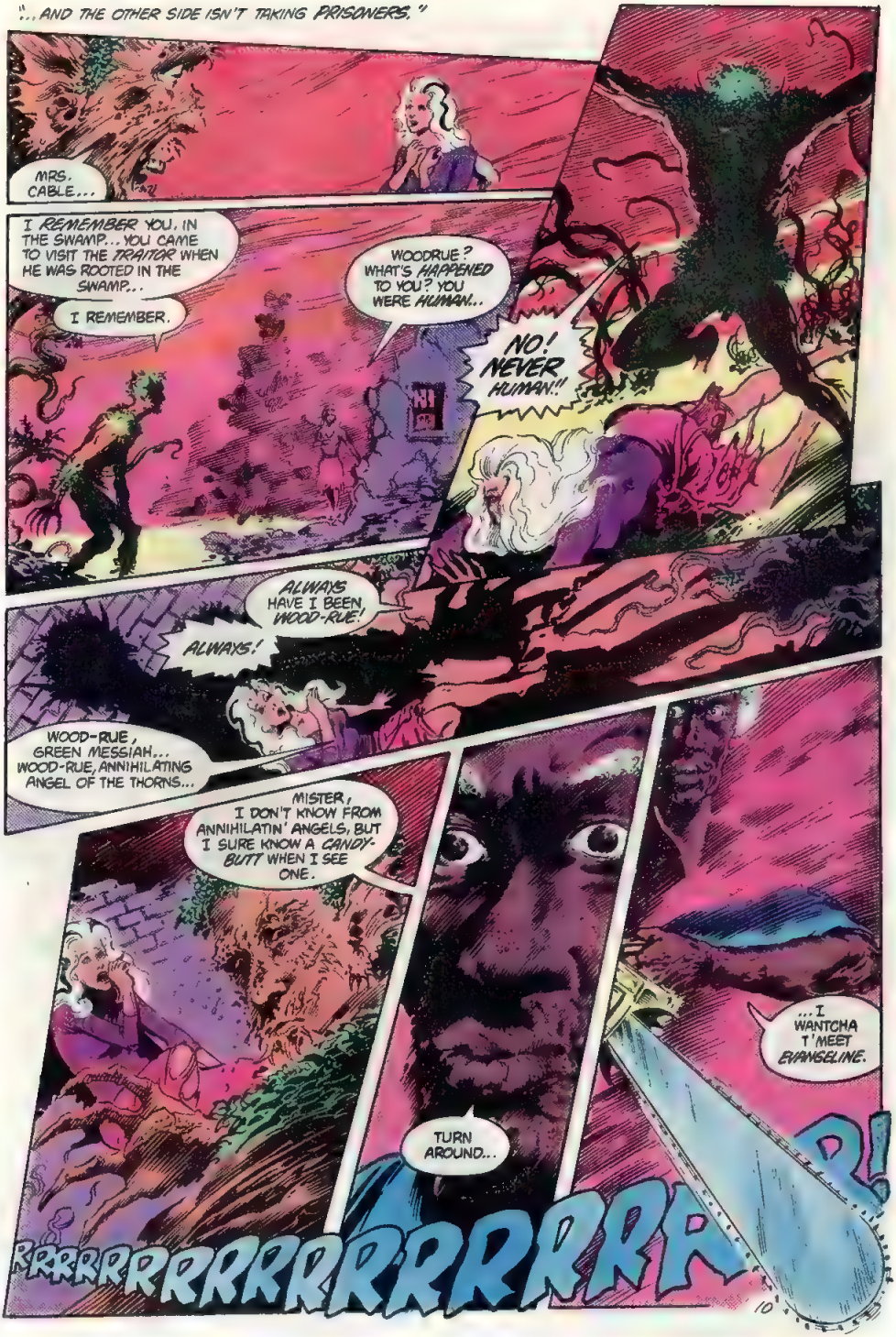
WHAT ABOUT THAT CHICK IN THE *TITANS*? BLACKBIRD! SHE'S AN *EMPATH*...

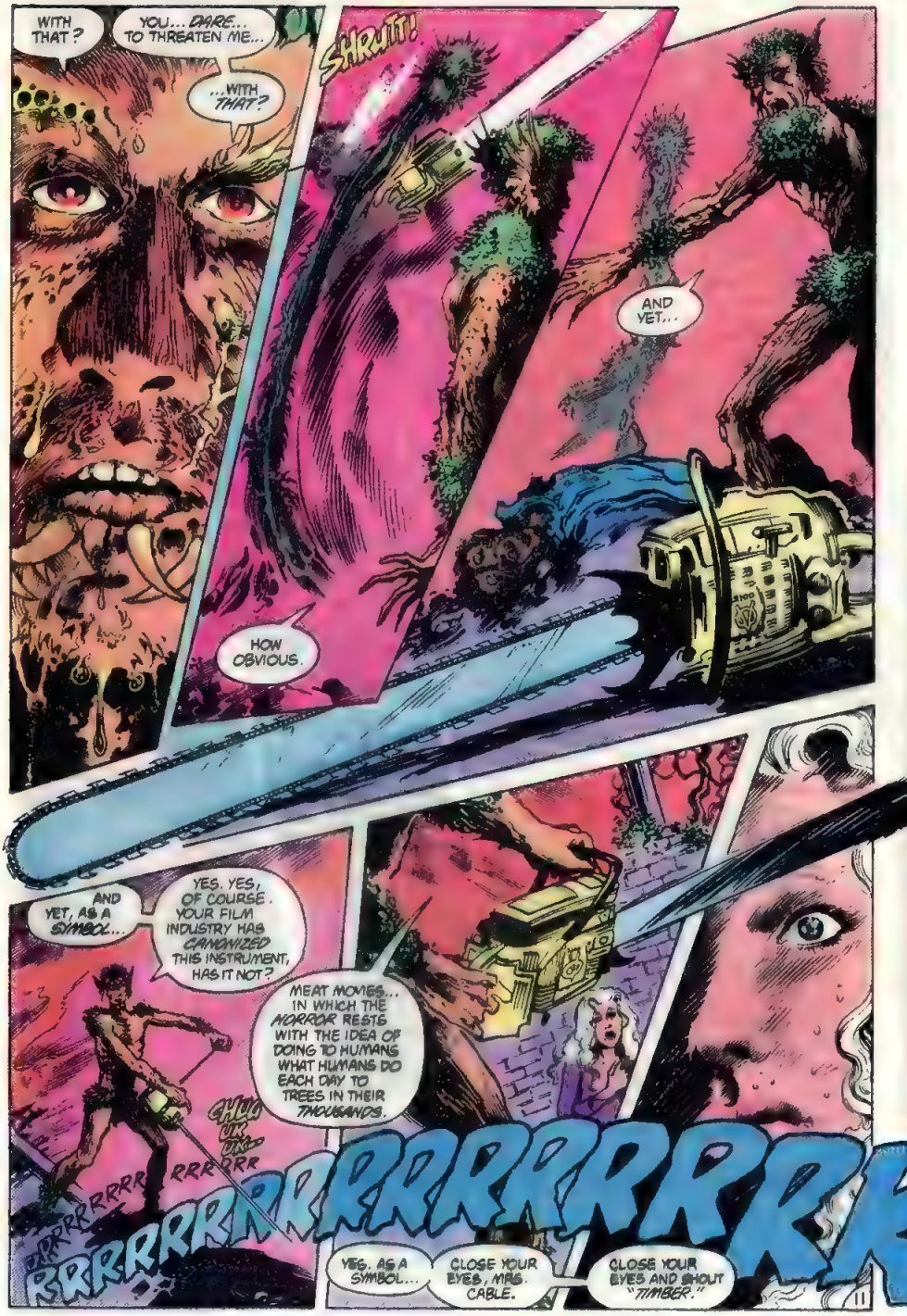
RAVEN. SHE'S ALREADY TRIED. THE MASS PLANT-MIND IS TOO *ALIEN*. SHE CAN *REACH* IT, BUT SHE CAN'T *UNDERSTAND* IT.

THIS IS RIDICULOUS. EVER SINCE WE FIRST ENCOUNTERED WOODRUE, HE'S LOST EVERY BATTLE HE'S EVER FOUGHT.

EVERY *BATTLE*, PERHAPS.

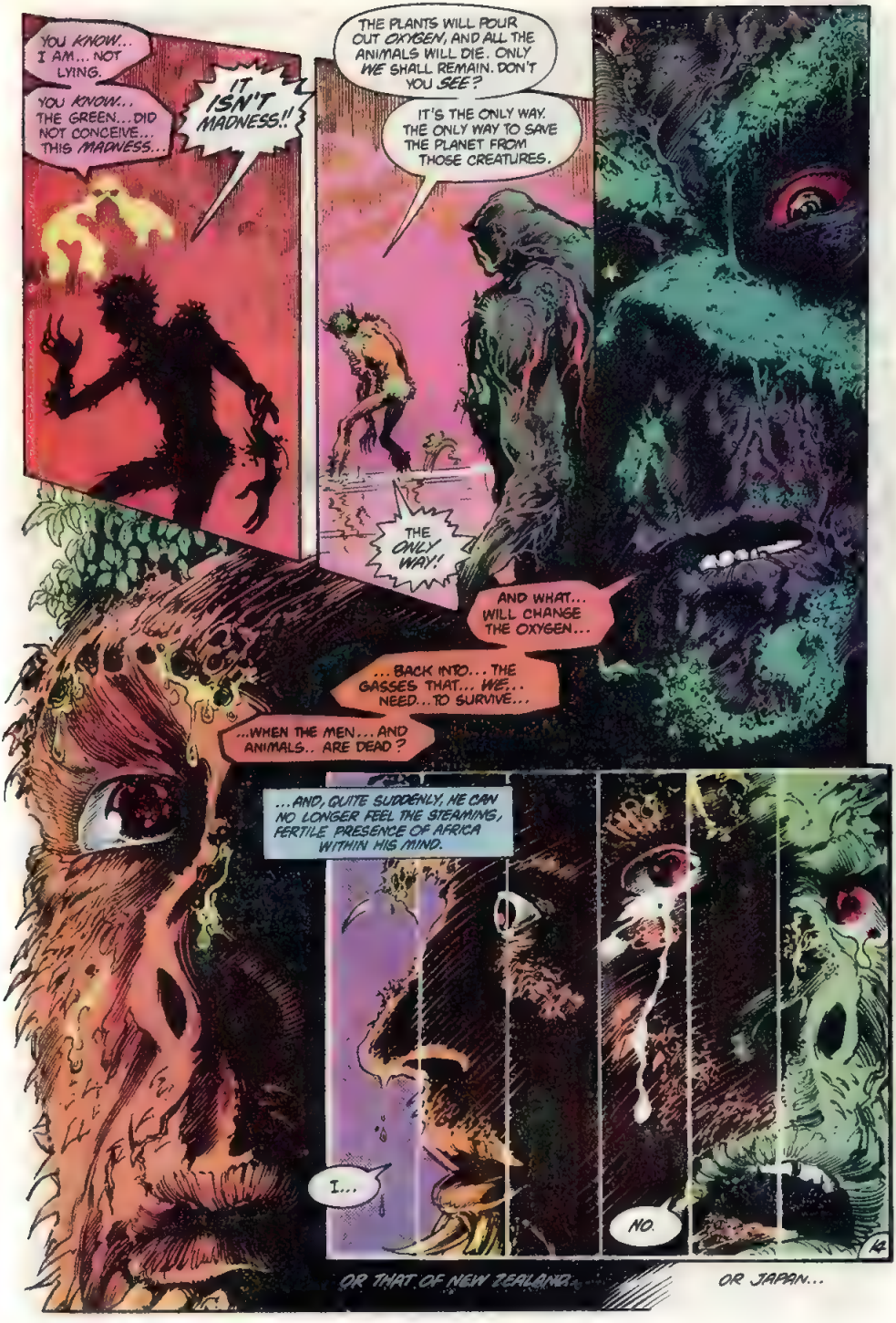
BUT THIS IS *WAR*...

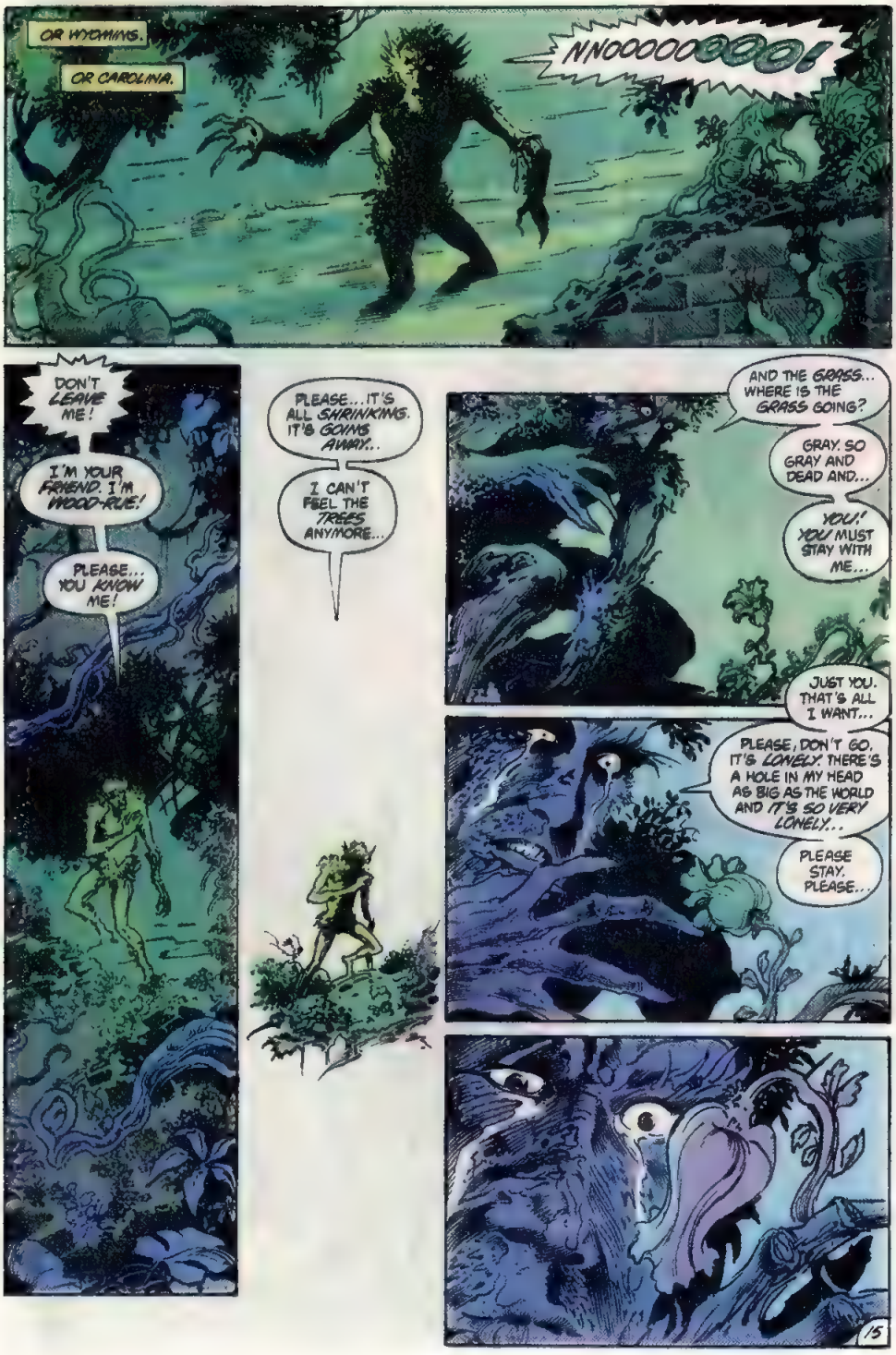

"...AND THE OTHER SIDE ISN'T TAKING PRISONERS."
MRS. CABLE...
I REMEMBER YOU. IN THE SWAMP... YOU CAME TO VISIT THE TRAITOR WHEN HE WAS ROOTED IN THE SWAMP...
I REMEMBER.
WOODRUE? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU WERE HUMAN...
NO! NEVER HUMAN!!
ALWAYS HAVE I BEEN, WOOD-RUE!
ALWAYS!
WOOD-RUE, GREEN MESSIAH... WOOD-RUE, ANNIHILATING ANGEL OF THE THORNS...
MISTER, I DON'T KNOW FROM ANNIHILATIN' ANGELS, BUT I SURE KNOW A CANDY-BUTT WHEN I SEE ONE.
...I WANTCHA T'MEET EVANGELINE.
TURN AROUND...
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR


WITH THAT?
YOU... DARE... TO THREATEN ME...
...WITH THAT?
SHRIIT!
AND YET...
HOW OBVIOUS.
AND YET, AS A SYMBOL...
YES. YES, OF COURSE. YOUR FILM INDUSTRY HAS CANONIZED THIS INSTRUMENT, HAS IT NOT?
MEAT MOVIES... IN WHICH THE HORROR RESTS WITH THE IDEA OF DOING TO HUMANS WHAT HUMANS DO EACH DAY TO TREES IN THEIR THOUSANDS.
CHUG CHUG CHUG
RRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRR

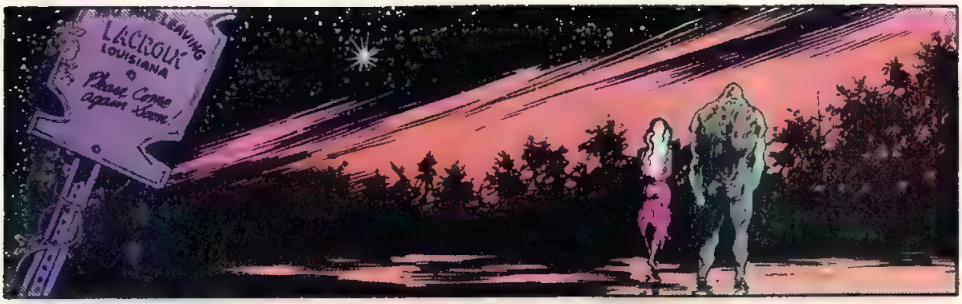
RRRRRRRRRRRR-
AAOO
OOAAAGH!
CCCCHHMM
OH. OH, MY ARM. IT'S... YOU'VE...
HHHHUHH
OH, IT HURTS...
-KA-CHOKA
WHY DO YOU KEEP COMING BACK?
WUH-WHY??
WHY DO YOU KEEP COMING BACK AND HURTING ME?
BECAUSE... YOU...
...ARE HURTING...
...THE GREEN.
ME?
12

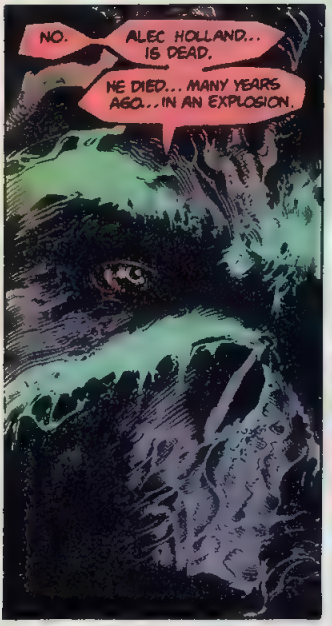
BUT THAT'S...
THAT'S NOT TRUE. NO, NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL...
I AM THE GREEN'S SERVANT. ITS WILL WORKS THROUGH ME. FOR I AM WOOD-RUE, WHO...
LOOK! LOOK AT... ALL... THIS!
THIS... IS NOT... THE WAY... OF THE WILDERNESS.
THIS... IS THE WAY... OF MAN.
YOUR WAY, WOODRUE...
THE GREEN... DID NOT... DO THIS.
YOU DID.
NO! THAT'S LIES. LIES AND...
I SPOKE TO THE GREEN! THIS IS WHAT IT TOLD ME TO DO!
THIS IS WHAT IT WANTED!
THIS... IS WHAT... YOU WANTED.
YOU ARE ILL... WOODRUE...
... AND YOU POISON... THE GREEN... WITH YOUR DESIRES...
YOU'RE LYING!
YOU'RE LYING YOU'RE LYING YOU'RE LYING!
WHY ARE YOU LYING?
13


YOU KNOW... I AM... NOT LYING.
YOU KNOW... THE GREEN... DID NOT CONCEIVE... THIS MADNESS...
IT ISN'T MADNESS!!
THE PLANTS WILL POUR OUT OXYGEN, AND ALL THE ANIMALS WILL DIE. ONLY WE SHALL REMAIN. DON'T YOU SEE?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY. THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE PLANET FROM THOSE CREATURES.
THE ONLY WAY!
AND WHAT... WILL CHANGE THE OXYGEN...
... BACK INTO... THE GASSES THAT... WE... NEED... TO SURVIVE...
...WHEN THE MEN... AND ANIMALS.. ARE DEAD?
...AND, QUITE SUDDENLY, HE CAN NO LONGER FEEL THE STEAMING, FERTILE PRESENCE OF AFRICA WITHIN HIS MIND.
I...
NO.
OR THAT OF NEW ZEALAND...
OR JAPAN...
42


OR WYOMING.
OR CAROLINA.
NNOOOOOOOO!
DON'T LEAVE ME!
I'M YOUR FRIEND. I'M WOOD-RUE!
PLEASE... YOU KNOW ME!
PLEASE... IT'S ALL SHRINKING. IT'S GOING AWAY...
I CAN'T FEEL THE TREES ANYMORE...
AND THE GRASS... WHERE IS THE GRASS GOING?
GRAY. SO GRAY AND DEAD AND...
YOU! YOU MUST STAY WITH ME...
JUST YOU. THAT'S ALL I WANT...
PLEASE, DON'T GO. IT'S LONELY. THERE'S A HOLE IN MY HEAD AS BIG AS THE WORLD AND IT'S SO VERY LONELY...
PLEASE STAY. PLEASE...
15

AAAAOOOOOOAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?
HE...FELL... FROM GRACE... WITH THE WORLD.
HE WAS... UPROOTED.
IT'S OVER.
HE REALIZED THAT THE PLANTS COULDN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT MAN...
...AND SO THE PLANTS BACKED DOWN.
YES. I WONDER...
...WILL YOUR PEOPLE...DO AS MUCH?





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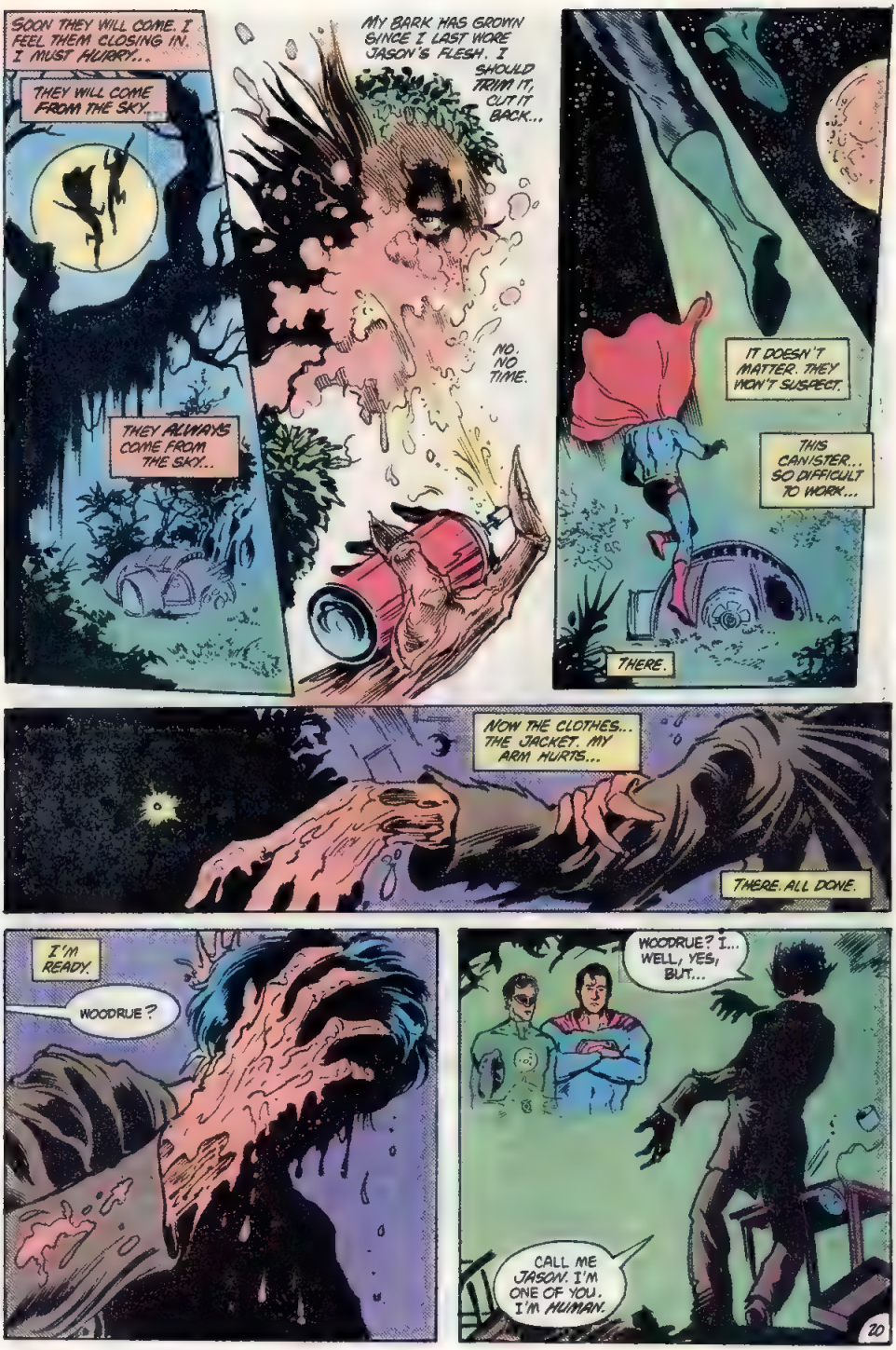
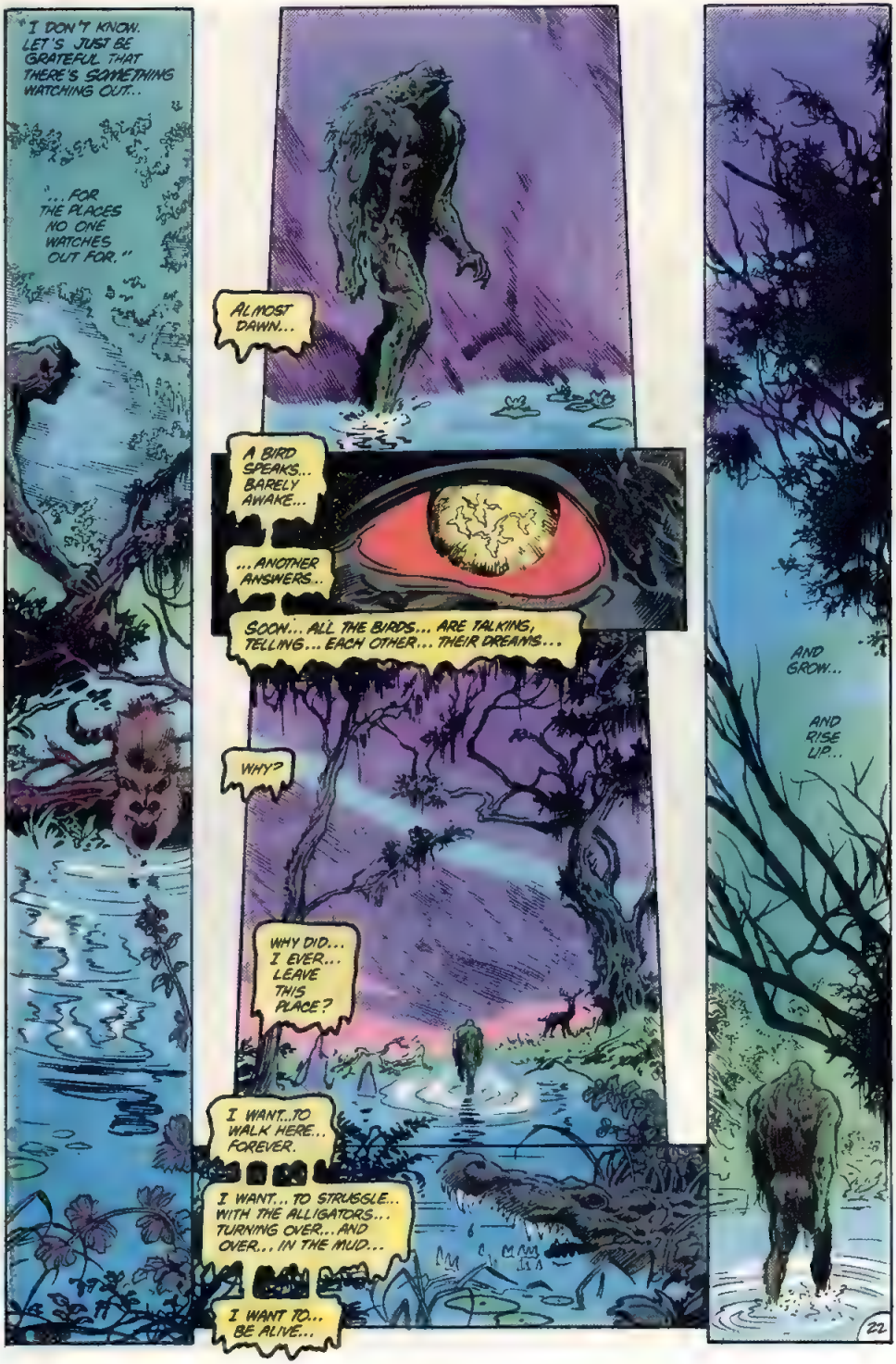
YOU'RE... HAPPY?
YES.
I'M SORRY, I...
WHERE WILL YOU GO TO?
WHERE I... ALWAYS.. GO...
BACK... HOME.
BACK TO... THE SWAMP.

ALWAYS...
ALWAYS THE SWAMP.
I AM RUNNING.
RUNNING THROUGH THE DEAD, GRAY TREES...
I AM RUNNING THROUGH A CROWD, AND NONE OF THEM WILL SPEAK TO ME. I AM NOT WORTHY.
MY ARM HURTS. I RUN. A RUNNING MAN..
NOT A PLANT.
A MAN.
I AM A MAN. JASON WOODRUE: DOCTOR JASON WOODRUE. JASON. CALL ME JASON..
BUT HOW WILL THEY KNOW? HOW WILL THEY KNOW I AM A MAN UNLESS I WEAR A MAN'S SKIN?
AAAHH...
19


SOON THEY WILL COME. I FEEL THEM CLOSING IN. I MUST HURRY...
THEY WILL COME FROM THE SKY...
THEY ALWAYS COME FROM THE SKY...
MY BARK HAS GROWN SINCE I LAST WORE JASON'S FLESH. I SHOULD TRIM IT, CUT IT BACK...
NO. NO TIME.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THEY WON'T SUSPECT.
THIS CANISTER... SO DIFFICULT TO WORK...
THERE.
NOW THE CLOTHES... THE JACKET. MY ARM HURTS...
THERE. ALL DONE.
I'M READY.
WOODRUE?
WOODRUE? I... WELL, YES, BUT...
CALL ME JASON. I'M ONE OF YOU. I'M HUMAN.

HUMAN LIKE YOU.
GOD...
WOODRUE? WOODRUE, WHAT...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
WRONG? WITH ME?
OH... YOU MEAN MY ARM! WELL, I BROKE IT. AN ACCIDENT. I WAS JUST, YOU KNOW, DOING SOMETHING NORMAL, DRIVING A CAR, FISHING, ONE OF THOSE THINGS US MEN DO..
...AND I BROKE IT.
IT HURTS. ACTUALLY, IT HURTS QUITE A LOT. I NEED A DOCTOR..
WHAT AM I SAYING? I AM A DOCTOR! HAHAHAHA..
WOODRUE... IT'S OKAY. WE'LL FIND YOU A DOCTOR.
ARKHAM?
I GUESS SO..
KAL?
WHAT HAPPENED OUT HERE?
21
CONTINUED ON 22 FOLLOWING


"I DON'T KNOW. LET'S JUST BE GRATEFUL THAT THERE'S SOMETHING WATCHING OUT...
"...FOR THE PLACES NO ONE WATCHES OUT FOR."
ALMOST DAWN...
A BIRD SPEAKS... BARELY AWAKE...
...ANOTHER ANSWERS..
SOON... ALL THE BIRDS... ARE TALKING, TELLING... EACH OTHER... THEIR DREAMS...
WHY?
WHY DID... I EVER... LEAVE THIS PLACE?
I WANT..TO WALK HERE... FOREVER.
I WANT... TO STRUGGLE... WITH THE ALLIGATORS... TURNING OVER... AND OVER... IN THE MUD...
I WANT TO... BE ALIVE...
AND GROW...
AND RISE UP...

...AND MEET THE SUN.
next: The Sleep of Reason...

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JUNE 84
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE SAGA OF THE
SWAMP THING
THE NEW
DC
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.
BY
ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

HE ARRIVED AT THE BATON ROUGE BUS DEPOT AT A LITTLE AFTER ELEVEN ON MONDAY MORNING...
GATE 16
... SO ANYWAY, MISTER, IT'S BEEN A GREAT PLEASURE TALKIN' TO YA!
I KNOW.
I KNOW THAT TWELVE YEARS AGO YOU CRASHED YOUR CAR WHILE DRUNK. YOU WALKED AWAY UNHURT, YOUR WIFE'S BEEN CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR EVER SINCE.
CURRENTLY, YOU HAVE FIVE DIFFERENT "GIRL-FRIENDS." YOU DO NOT BOTHER TO CONCEAL THEM FROM YOUR WIFE, ALTHOUGH YOU KNOW HOW MUCH PAIN THIS CAUSES HER...
AN' LISSEN, IF YOU EVER NEED ANY LOFT INSULATION, HARRY PRICE IS MY NAME, THIS IS MY CARD...
HA.
I'M SORRY, MR. PRICE, THIS CARD WON'T BE ANY USE TO ME.
HEY, NOW LOOK, YOU NEVER KNOW!..
HARRY PRICE
LOFT INSULATION
HEY!! WAIT, I NEVER TOLD YOU ANY...
...AND AT 5:32 THIS EVENING YOU WILL BE IMPALED BY A SWORDFISH.
THERE IS NOTHING TO BE DONE. IT IS WRITTEN. SELENA HAS ALREADY DECIDED NOT TO BUY THE LAWN FURNITURE.
SO YOU SEE...
...YOUR CARD WON'T BE ANY USE TO ME AT ALL.
GOOD DAY.

THE SAGA OF SWAMP THING 25 Published monthly by DC Comics Inc . 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103 POSTMASTER Send address changes to DC Comics Inc . Subscription Dept . PO Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, NJ 07024 Annual subscription rate $9 00 Outside USA $10 00 Copyright © 1984 DC Comics Inc All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional Printed in USA Advertising Representative Sanford Schwarz & Co., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017. (212) 391-1400.
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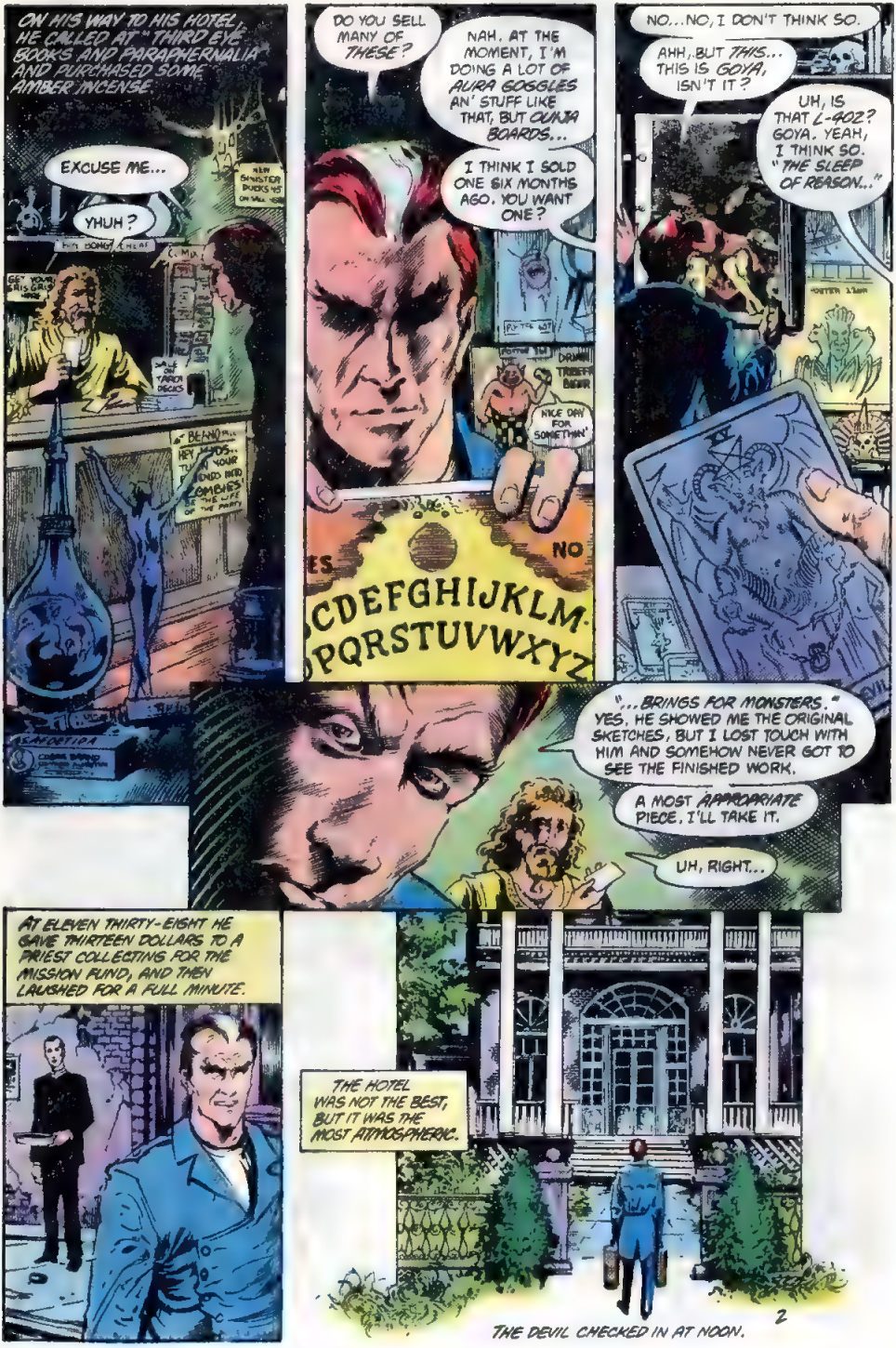
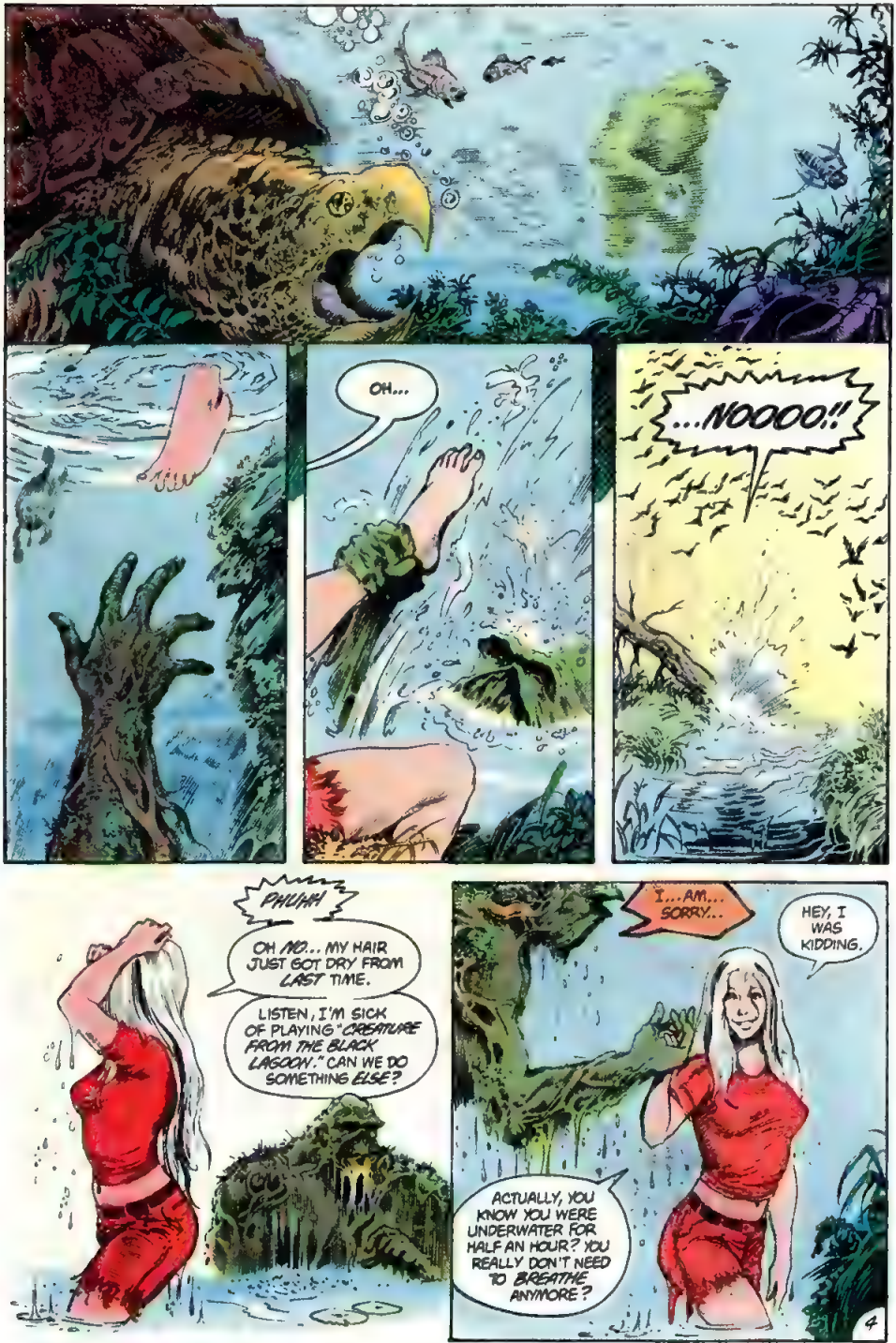
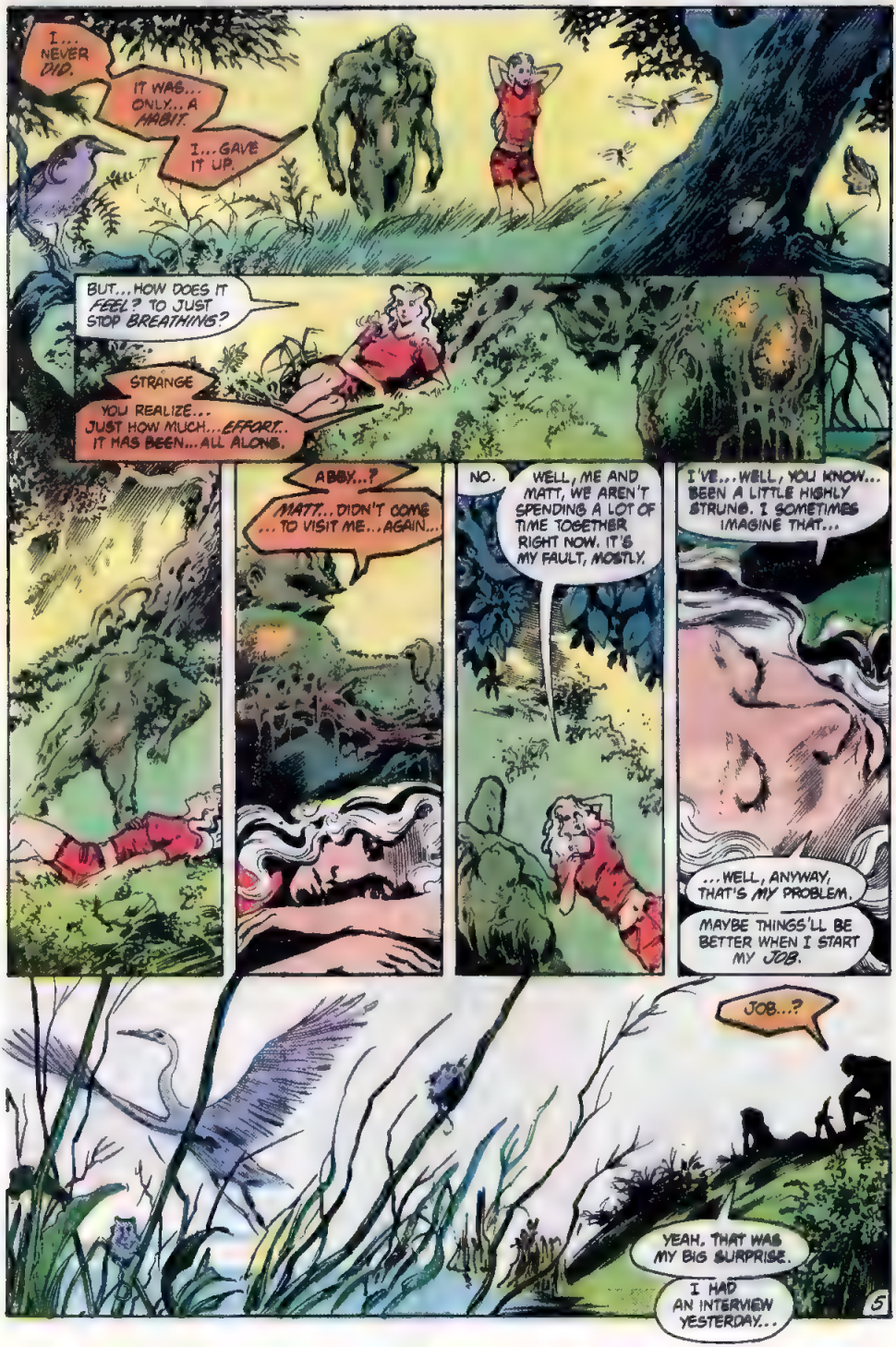
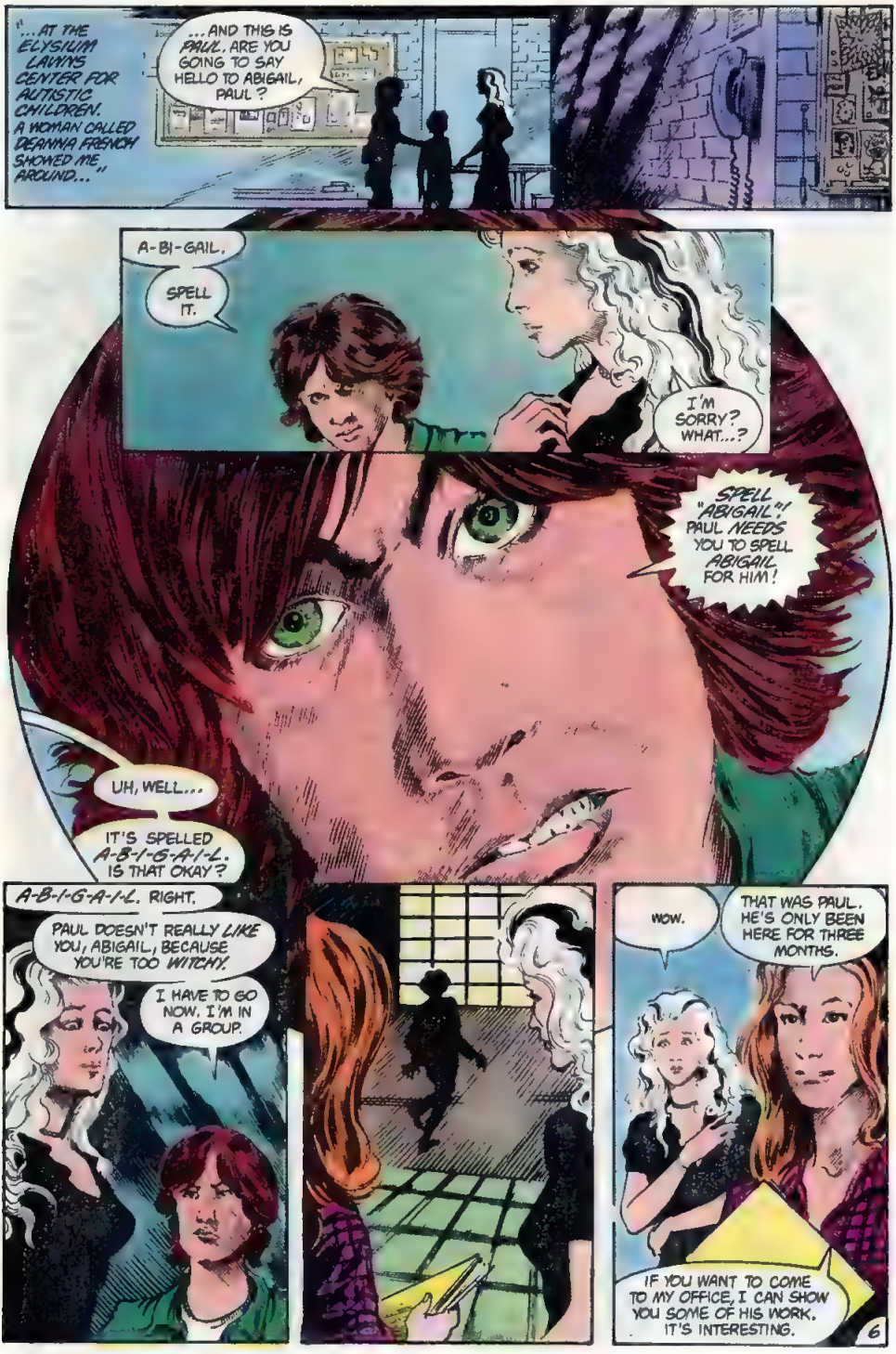
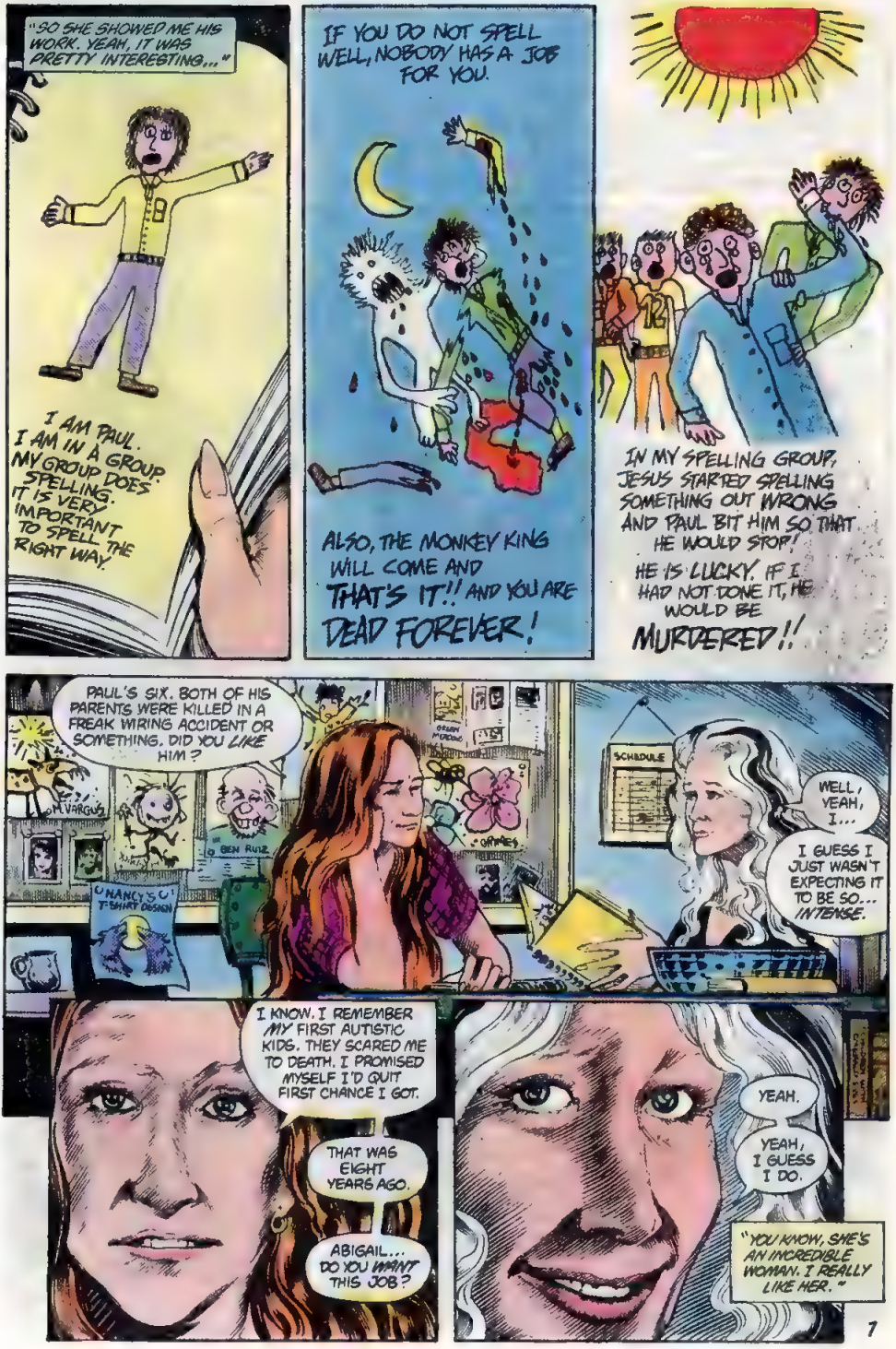

ON HIS WAY TO HIS HOTEL, HE CALLED AT "THIRD EYE" BOOKS AND PARAPHERNALIA AND PURCHASED SOME AMBER INCENSE.
EXCUSE ME...
YHUH?
DO YOU SELL MANY OF THESE?
NAH. AT THE MOMENT, I'M DOING A LOT OF AURA GOGGLES AN' STUFF LIKE THAT, BUT OUIJA BOARDS...
I THINK I SOLD ONE SIX MONTHS AGO. YOU WANT ONE?
NO...NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
AHH, BUT THIS... THIS IS GOYA, ISN'T IT?
UH, IS THAT L-402? GOYA. YEAH, I THINK SO. "THE SLEEP OF REASON..."
"...BRINGS FOR MONSTERS." YES. HE SHOWED ME THE ORIGINAL SKETCHES, BUT I LOST TOUCH WITH HIM AND SOMEHOW NEVER GOT TO SEE THE FINISHED WORK.
A MOST APPROPRIATE PIECE. I'LL TAKE IT.
UH, RIGHT...
AT ELEVEN THIRTY-EIGHT HE GAVE THIRTEEN DOLLARS TO A PRIEST COLLECTING FOR THE MISSION FUND, AND THEN LAUGHED FOR A FULL MINUTE.
THE HOTEL WAS NOT THE BEST, BUT IT WAS THE MOST ATMOSPHERIC.
THE DEVIL CHECKED IN AT NOON.
2

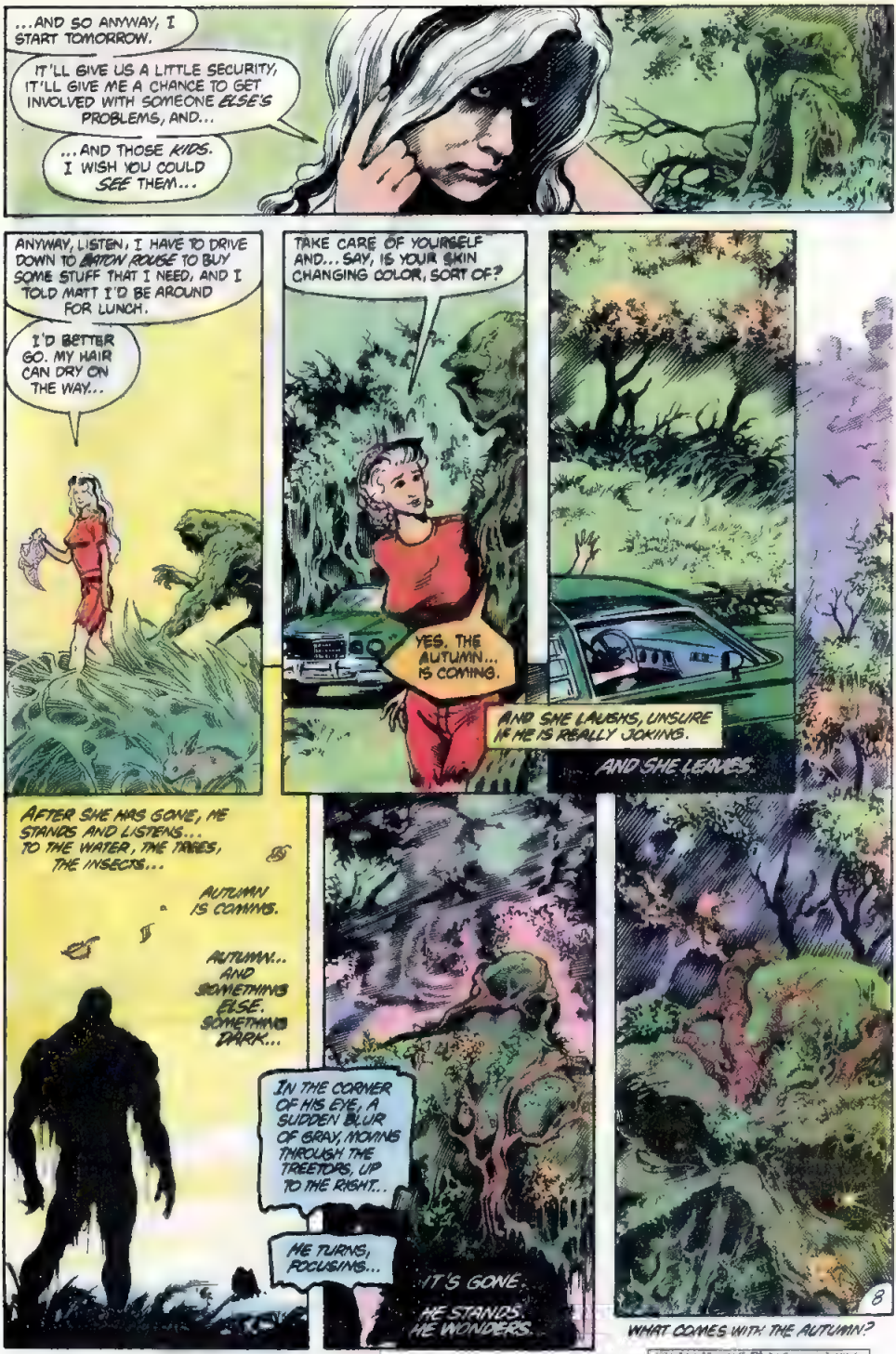
an alan moore : writer ✦ stephen bissette & john totleben : artists
karen berger : editor ✦ tatjana wood : colorist ✦ john costanza : letterer presentation


OH...
...NOOOO!!
PHUAH
OH NO... MY HAIR JUST GOT DRY FROM LAST TIME.
LISTEN, I'M SICK OF PLAYING "CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON." CAN WE DO SOMETHING ELSE?
I...AM... SORRY...
HEY, I WAS KIDDING.
ACTUALLY, YOU KNOW YOU WERE UNDERWATER FOR HALF AN HOUR? YOU REALLY DON'T NEED TO BREATHE ANYMORE?
4

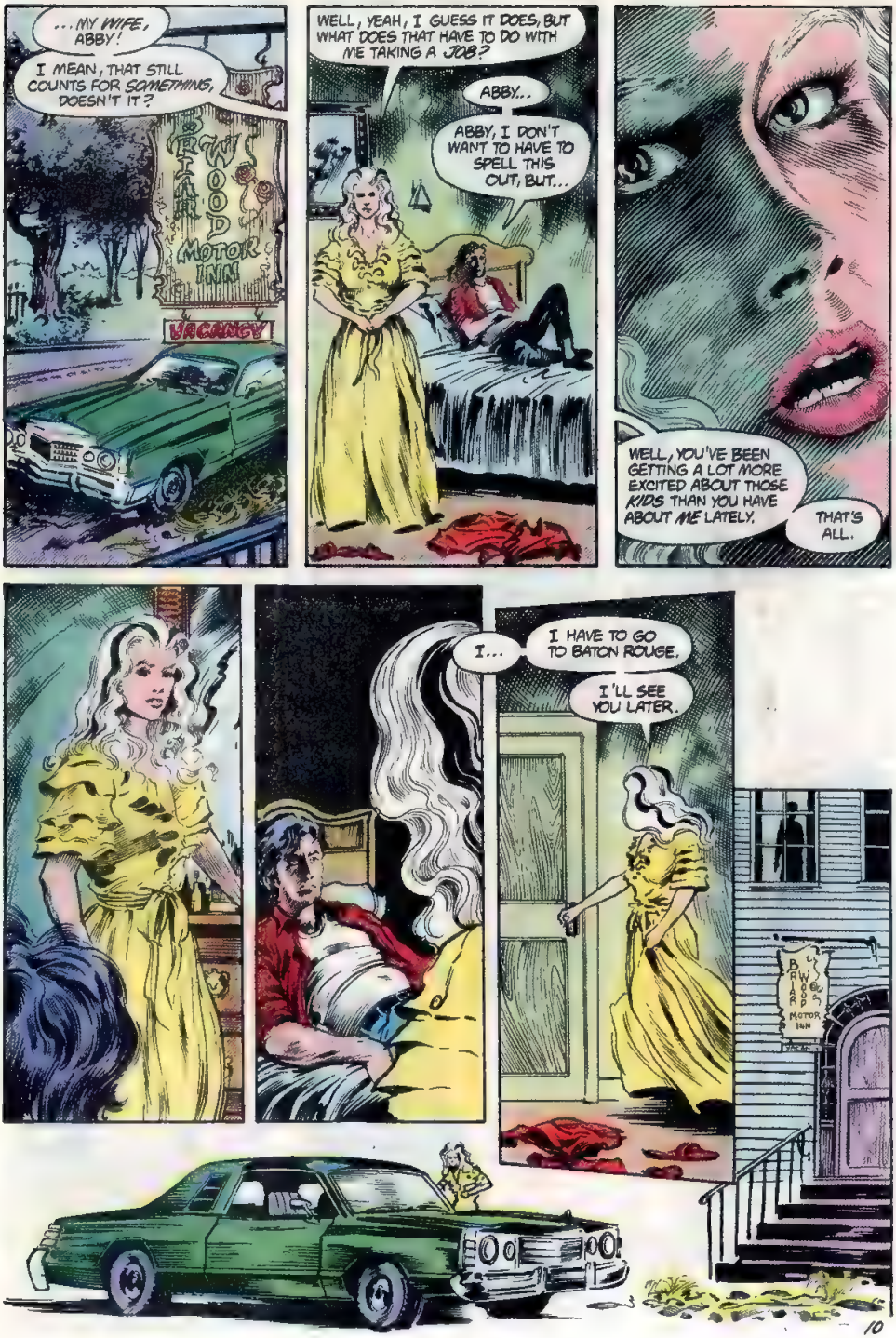

I... NEVER DID.
IT WAS... ONLY... A HABIT.
I... GAVE IT UP.
BUT... HOW DOES IT FEEL? TO JUST STOP BREATHING?
STRANGE
YOU REALIZE... JUST HOW MUCH... EFFORT... IT HAS BEEN... ALL ALONG.
ABBY...?
MATT... DIDN'T COME ... TO VISIT ME... AGAIN...
NO.
WELL, ME AND MATT, WE AREN'T SPENDING A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER RIGHT NOW. IT'S MY FAULT, MOSTLY.
I'VE... WELL, YOU KNOW... BEEN A LITTLE HIGHLY STRUNG. I SOMETIMES IMAGINE THAT...
...WELL, ANYWAY, THAT'S MY PROBLEM.
MAYBE THINGS'LL BE BETTER WHEN I START MY JOB.
JOB...?
YEAH, THAT WAS MY BIG SURPRISE.
I HAD AN INTERVIEW YESTERDAY...


"...AT THE ELYSIUM LAWNS CENTER FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN. A WOMAN CALLED DEANNA FRENCH SHOWED ME AROUND..."
...AND THIS IS PAUL. ARE YOU GOING TO SAY HELLO TO ABIGAIL, PAUL?
A-BI-GAIL.
SPELL IT.
I'M SORRY? WHAT...?
SPELL "ABIGAIL"?! PAUL NEEDS YOU TO SPELL ABIGAIL FOR HIM!
UH, WELL...
IT'S SPELLED A-B-I-G-A-I-L. IS THAT OKAY?
A-B-I-G-A-I-L. RIGHT.
PAUL DOESN'T REALLY LIKE YOU, ABIGAIL, BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO WITCHY.
I HAVE TO GO NOW. I'M IN A GROUP.
WOW.
THAT WAS PAUL. HE'S ONLY BEEN HERE FOR THREE MONTHS.
IF YOU WANT TO COME TO MY OFFICE, I CAN SHOW YOU SOME OF HIS WORK. IT'S INTERESTING.
6

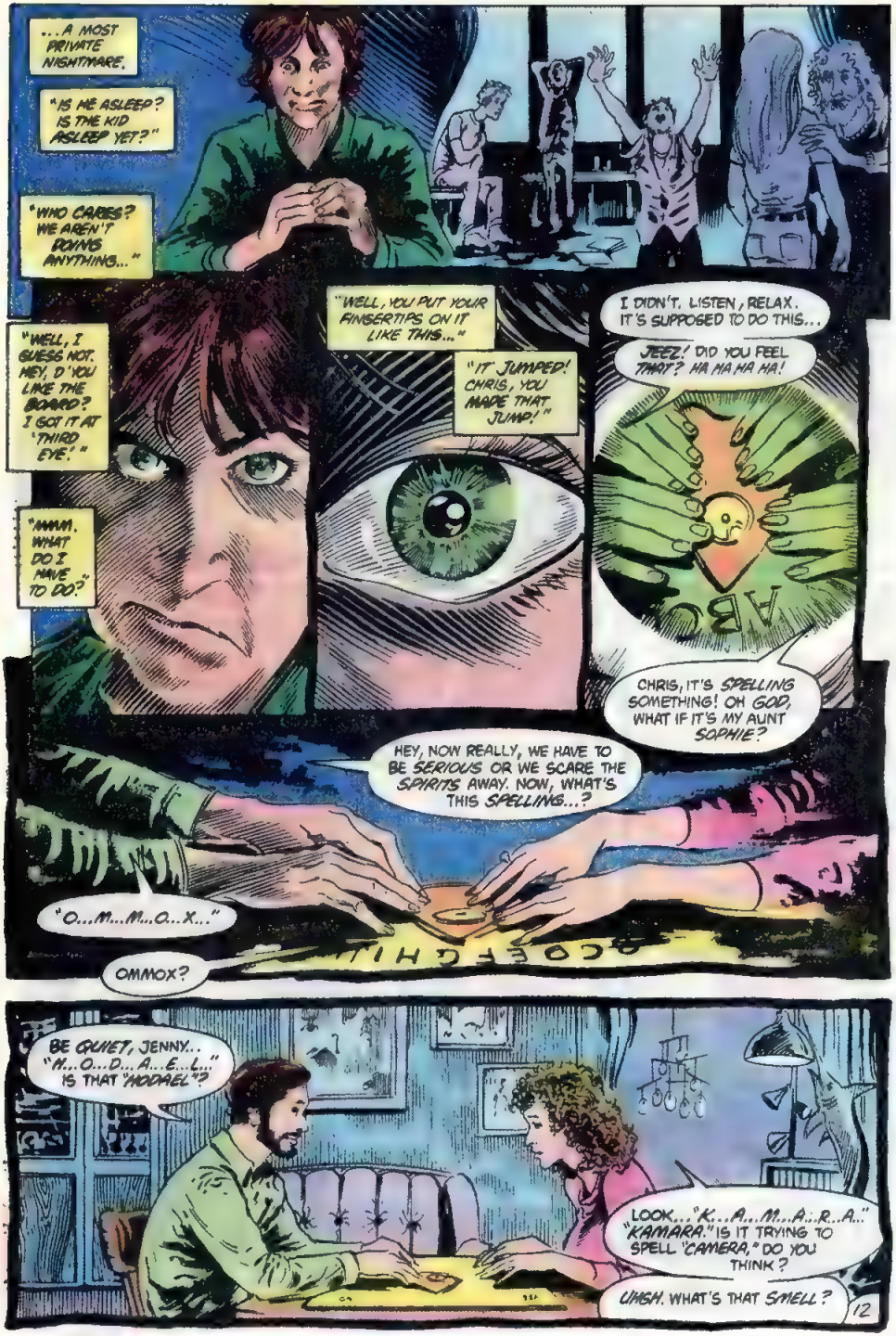

"SO SHE SHOWED ME HIS WORK. YEAH, IT WAS PRETTY INTERESTING..."
I AM PAUL. I AM IN A GROUP. MY GROUP DOES SPELLING. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO SPELL THE RIGHT WAY.
IF YOU DO NOT SPELL WELL, NOBODY HAS A JOB FOR YOU.
ALSO, THE MONKEY KING WILL COME AND THAT'S IT!! AND YOU ARE DEAD FOREVER!
IN MY SPELLING GROUP, JESUS STARTED SPELLING SOMETHING OUT WRONG AND PAUL BIT HIM SO THAT HE WOULD STOP!
HE IS LUCKY. IF I HAD NOT DONE IT, HE WOULD BE MURDERED!!
PAUL'S SIX. BOTH OF HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED IN A FREAK WIRING ACCIDENT OR SOMETHING. DID YOU LIKE HIM?
M. VARGAS
BEN RUIZ
NANCY'S T-SHIRT DESIGN
SCHEDULE
WELL, YEAH, I...
I GUESS I JUST WASN'T EXPECTING IT TO BE SO... INTENSE.
I KNOW. I REMEMBER MY FIRST AUTISTIC KIDS. THEY SCARED ME TO DEATH. I PROMISED MYSELF I'D QUIT FIRST CHANCE I GOT.
THAT WAS EIGHT YEARS AGO.
ABIGAIL... DO YOU WANT THIS JOB?
YEAH.
YEAH, I GUESS I DO.
"YOU KNOW, SHE'S AN INCREDIBLE WOMAN. I REALLY LIKE HER."


...AND SO ANYWAY, I START TOMORROW.
IT'LL GIVE US A LITTLE SECURITY, IT'LL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEMS, AND...
...AND THOSE KIDS. I WISH YOU COULD SEE THEM...
ANYWAY, LISTEN, I HAVE TO DRIVE DOWN TO BATON ROUGE TO BUY SOME STUFF THAT I NEED, AND I TOLD MATT I'D BE AROUND FOR LUNCH.
I'D BETTER GO. MY HAIR CAN DRY ON THE WAY...
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND... SAY, IS YOUR SKIN CHANGING COLOR, SORT OF?
YES. THE AUTUMN... IS COMING.
AND SHE LAUGHS, UNSURE IF HE IS REALLY JOKING.
AND SHE LEAVES.
AFTER SHE HAS GONE, HE STANDS AND LISTENS... TO THE WATER, THE TREES, THE INSECTS...
AUTUMN IS COMING.
AUTUMN... AND SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING DARK...
IN THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, A SUDDEN BLUR OF GRAY, MOVING THROUGH THE TREETOPS, UP TO THE RIGHT...
HE TURNS, FOCUSING...
IT'S GONE.
HE STANDS. HE WONDERS.
8
WHAT COMES WITH THE AUTUMN?
CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

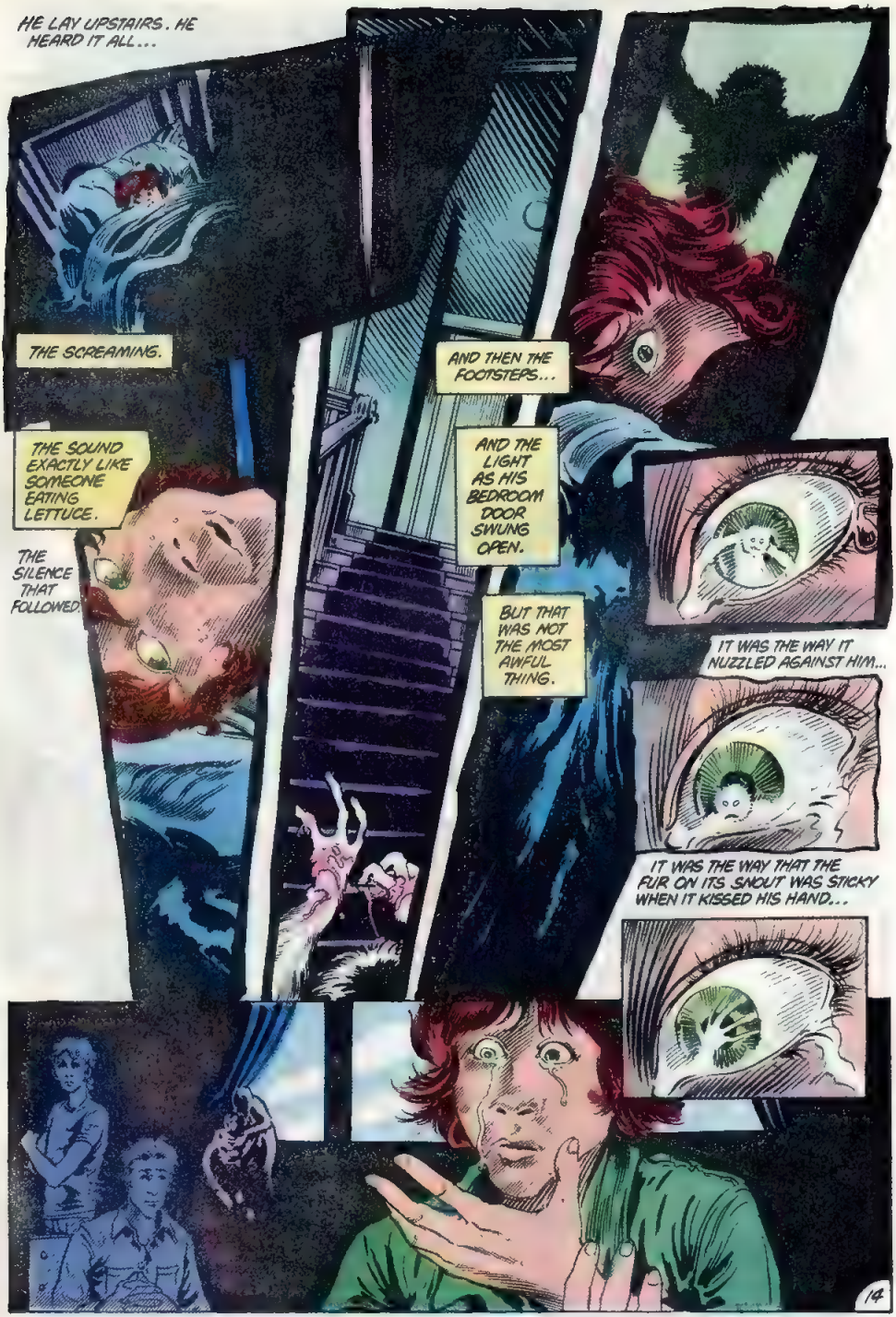
AUTUMN CLEARANCE AUCTION
OH, SAY, EXCUSE ME... YOU'VE JUST BEEN TO THE AUCTION, RIGHT?
SPARKY'S BATON ROUGE
AU TION
BA RN
I HAVE.
OH, WELL, I JUST WONDERED IF YOU KNEW WHETHER THE LAWN FURNITURE HAD GONE YET?
BEER DRINKERS DO IT WITH GUS
NO
FGHIJKLM
STUVWXYZ
67890
BYE
NO. I'M SORRY.
FLIKE
AAH, IT DOESN'T MATTER.
SAY, YOU KNOW THIS STUFF COMES FROM SOME FAMILY THAT DIED? I READ IT INNA PAPERS.
MAN AN' HIS WIFE, BOTH DEAD. KID'S IN A LOONY BIN, I HEAR.
TERRIBLE BUSINESS. STILL, IT'S AN ILL WIND BLOWS NOBODY ANY GOOD.
MY WIFE'S IN THERE BIDDING FOR THE LAWN CHAIRS. I TELL YA, NEXT SUMMER I'M GONNA DO SOME REAL RELAXIN'...
AUCTION
EVERY SATURDAY NITE
MR. CORELLI...
BEER
NEXT SUMMER, YOU'LL BE IN JAIL FOR MANSLAUGHTER.
YOU SEE, SELENA DOESN'T LIKE THE LAWN CHAIRS.
GOOD DAY TO YOU, SIR.
HUH?
HEY... WAIT A MINUTE. HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT SELENA WAS THE NAME OF...
9


...MY WIFE, ABBY!
I MEAN, THAT STILL COUNTS FOR SOMETHING, DOESN'T IT?
BIRCHWOOD MOTOR INN
VACANCY
WELL, YEAH, I GUESS IT DOES, BUT WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME TAKING A JOB?
ABBY...
ABBY, I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO SPELL THIS OUT, BUT...
WELL, YOU'VE BEEN GETTING A LOT MORE EXCITED ABOUT THOSE KIDS THAN YOU HAVE ABOUT ME LATELY.
THAT'S ALL.
I...
I HAVE TO GO TO BATON ROUGE.
I'LL SEE YOU LATER.
BIRCHWOOD MOTOR INN

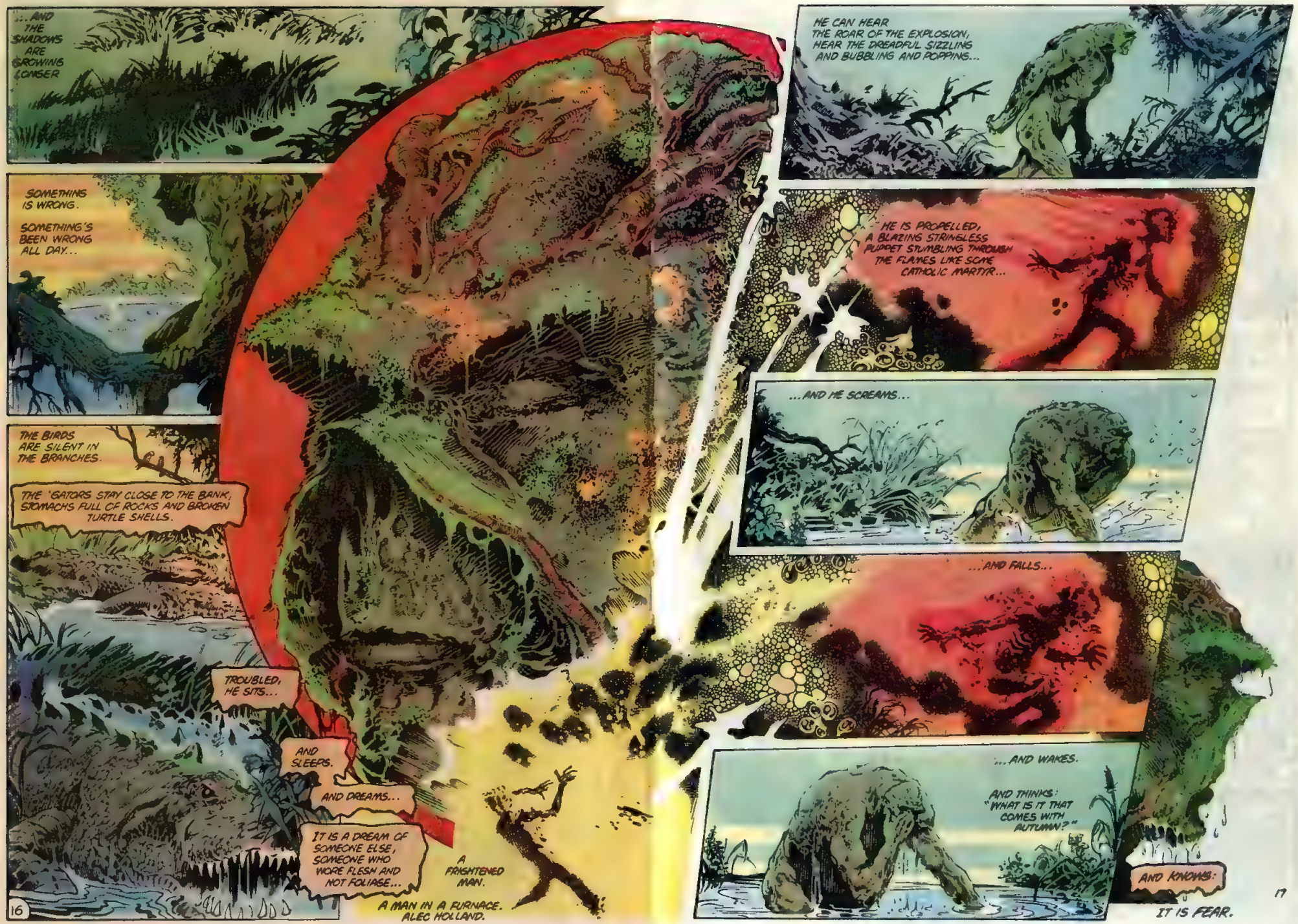
STAND UP.
THERE.
NOW GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES...
...AND APOLOGIZE.
SOMETHING SNIGGERS AS IT UNCOILS FROM BENEATH THE BED. SOMETHING RUSTLES AS IT CLAMBERS DOWN THE DRAPES. MATT CABLE IS HAPPY IN A VERY PERSONAL HEAVEN...


...A MOST PRIVATE NIGHTMARE.
"IS HE ASLEEP? IS THE KID ASLEEP YET?"
"WHO CARES? WE AREN'T DOING ANYTHING..."
"WELL, I GUESS NOT. HEY, D'YOU LIKE THE BOARD? I GOT IT AT 'THIRD EYE.'"
"MMM. WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?"
"WELL, YOU PUT YOUR FINGERTIPS ON IT LIKE THIS..."
"IT JUMPED! CHRIS, YOU MADE THAT JUMP!"
I DIDN'T. LISTEN, RELAX. IT'S SUPPOSED TO DO THIS...
JEEZ! DID YOU FEEL THAT? HA HA HA HA!
CHRIS, IT'S SPELLING SOMETHING! OH GOD, WHAT IF IT'S MY AUNT SOPHIE?
HEY, NOW REALLY, WE HAVE TO BE SERIOUS OR WE SCARE THE SPIRITS AWAY. NOW, WHAT'S THIS SPELLING...?
"O...M...M...O...X..."
OMMOX?
BE QUIET, JENNY... "H...O...D...A...E...L..." IS THAT "HODAEL"?
LOOK..."K...A...M...A...R...A..." "KAMARA." IS IT TRYING TO SPELL "CAMERA," DO YOU THINK?
UMSH. WHAT'S THAT SMELL?
12

WHAT SM...
OH, YEAH. JEEZ! THAT IS GROSS! IS THAT THE REFRIGERATOR OR...
I DUNNO. SAY, IS IT COMING FROM UNDER THE...
...TABLE?
JENNY!!
CHRIIISSSS!!
WHAT'S IT DOING TO MEEEEEEE
EEEEEEE
OH JENNY..
OH JENNY..
OH NO..
AAAAAAEEEEE


HE LAY UPSTAIRS. HE HEARD IT ALL...
THE SCREAMING.
THE SOUND EXACTLY LIKE SOMEONE EATING LETTUCE.
THE SILENCE THAT FOLLOWED.
AND THEN THE FOOTSTEPS...
AND THE LIGHT AS HIS BEDROOM DOOR SWUNG OPEN.
BUT THAT WAS NOT THE MOST AWFUL THING.
IT WAS THE WAY IT NUZZLED AGAINST HIM...
IT WAS THE WAY THAT THE FUR ON ITS SNOUT WAS STICKY WHEN IT KISSED HIS HAND...
THAT WAS THE MOST AWFUL THING.
14
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

SELENA, THAT IS THE MOST AWFUL THING I HAVE EVER SEEN! WHERE ARE WE GONNA PUT IT?
AUTUMN CLEARANCE
SPARKY'S BATON ROUGE AUCTION BARN
BOBBY, SHUT UP AND TIE IT ONNA ROOF.
SELENA, I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT'S LEGAL DRIVING WITH STUFF ON THE ROOF!
WHY THE HELL DIDN'T YOU BUY THE LAWN CHAIRS?
BECAUSE I DIDN'T LIKE THE LAWN CHAIRS AND IT'S MY MONEY. NOW SHUT UP!
OH, RIGHT, SURE. I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT YOU TOLD YOUR PSYCHO BOYFRIEND THAT YOU MET IN THE AUCTION?
I DIDN'T MEET ANYONE AT THE AUCTION. I WISH TO GOD I HAD, BELIEVE ME.
NOW GET IN THE CAR, BOBBY, AND DRIVE!
YOU KNOW! THE RED-HAIRED GUY WHO BOUGHT THE WEEJEE BOARD...
OH, YOU FEEBLE, SUSPICIOUS-MINDED LITTLE...
AND I SUPPOSE ME WAS THE ONE WHO PUT YOU UP TO BUYING THAT PIECE OF JUNK ON THE ROOF?
DRIVE, BOBBY...
JEEZ, NO WONDER THOSE PEOPLE GOT KILLED! ANYBODY WHO'D ALLOW AN EYESORE LIKE THAT INTO THEIR HOME DESERVES...
BO-BEE...
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW...
KOFF! KAF!
IT'S TEN MINUTES AFTER FIVE...
15


...AND THE SHADOWS ARE GROWING LONGER
SOMETHING IS WRONG.
SOMETHING'S BEEN WRONG ALL DAY...
THE BIRDS ARE SILENT IN THE BRANCHES.
THE 'GATORS STAY CLOSE TO THE BANK, STOMACHS FULL OF ROCKS AND BROKEN TURTLE SHELLS.
TROUBLED, HE SITS...
AND SLEEPS.
AND DREAMS...
IT IS A DREAM OF SOMEONE ELSE, SOMEONE WHO WORE FLESH AND NOT FOLIAGE...
A FRIGHTENED MAN.
A MAN IN A FURNACE. ALEC HOLLAND.
HE CAN HEAR THE ROAR OF THE EXPLOSION, HEAR THE DREADFUL SIZZLING AND BUBBLING AND POPPING...
HE IS PROPELLED, A BLAZING STRINGLESS PUPPET STUMBLING THROUGH THE FLAMES LIKE SOME CATHOLIC MARTYR...
...AND HE SCREAMS...
...AND FALLS...
...AND WAKES.
AND THINKS: "WHAT IS IT THAT COMES WITH AUTUMN?"
AND KNOWS:
IT IS FEAR.

IT IS FEAR THAT COMES WITH THE AUTUMN.
HE FEELS IT...
El sueño de la razon produce monstruos
IT THRUMS BENEATH HIS THICK, POWERFUL FINGERS, AND ITS BOUQUET OF SOURED SWEAT IS NOT MASKED BY THE INCENSE
WITHIN THE DARK POOL OF HIS MIND IMAGES UNFOLD, OPENING LIKE ANEMONES IN BRINE...
THE MAN, THE WOMAN, THE BOY AWAKE UPSTAIRS...
THE PLANCHETTE MOVING...
IJK
...OMMOX...
TUV
...HODAEL...
...KAMARA.
THE PENULTIMATE FRAGMENT OF THE CRYPTOGRAM TUMBLES INTO PLACE... AN INVOCATION, SPELLED OUT BY A OUIJA BOARD.
THAT WAS HOW THE DAMNED THING HAD CLAWED ITS WAY THROUGH INTO THE WORLD OF SANITY AND REASON.
THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE.
IT IS ALREADY HALF PAST FIVE...

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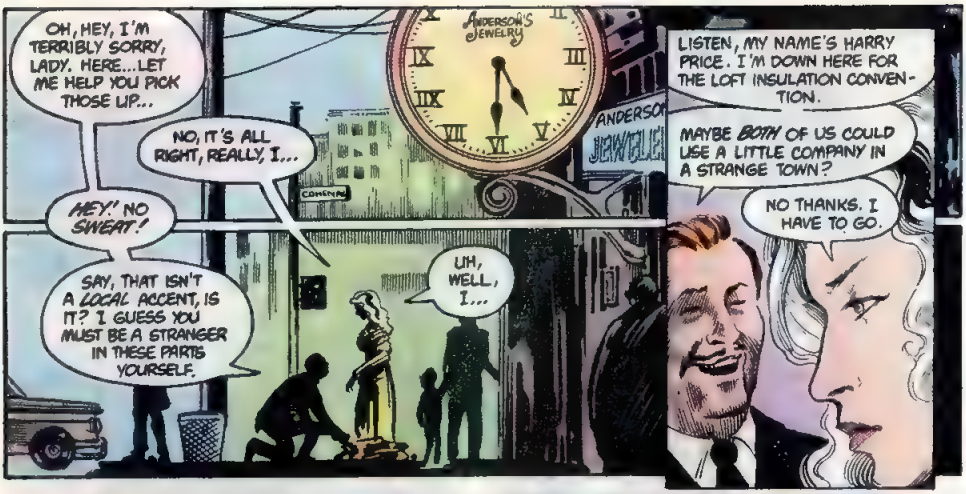
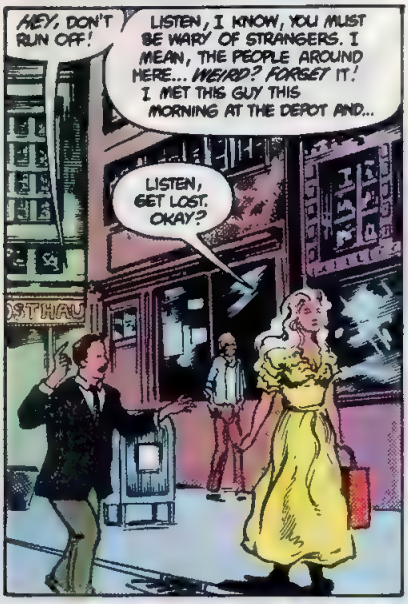
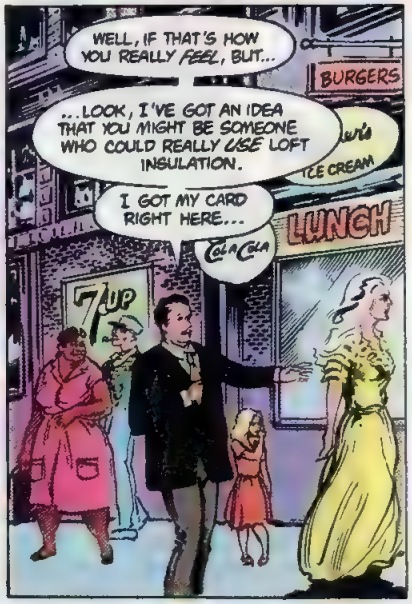

OH, HEY, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, LADY. HERE...LET ME HELP YOU PICK THOSE UP...
NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT, REALLY, I...
HEY! NO SWEAT!
SAY, THAT ISN'T A LOCAL ACCENT, IS IT? I GUESS YOU MUST BE A STRANGER IN THESE PARTS YOURSELF.
UH, WELL, I...
ANDERSON'S JEWELRY
ANDERSON
JEWELER
LISTEN, MY NAME'S HARRY PRICE. I'M DOWN HERE FOR THE LOFT INSULATION CONVENTION.
MAYBE BOTH OF US COULD USE A LITTLE COMPANY IN A STRANGE TOWN?
NO THANKS. I HAVE TO GO.


HEY, DON'T RUN OFF!
LISTEN, I KNOW, YOU MUST BE WARY OF STRANGERS. I MEAN, THE PEOPLE AROUND HERE... WEIRD? FORGET IT! I MET THIS GUY THIS MORNING AT THE DEPOT AND...
LISTEN, GET LOST. OKAY?


WELL, IF THAT'S HOW YOU REALLY FEEL, BUT...
...LOOK, I'VE GOT AN IDEA THAT YOU MIGHT BE SOMEONE WHO COULD REALLY USE LOFT INSULATION.
I GOT MY CARD RIGHT HERE...
BURGERS
LUNCH
7UP
COCA-COLA

BOBBY! FOR GOD'S SAKE LOOK OUT!!

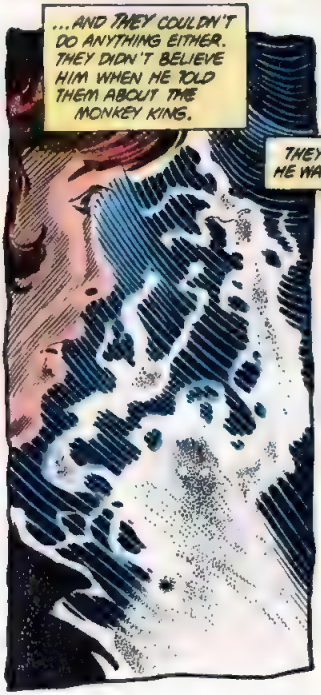
EEEEEEEEEEE!
LOFT
SOLD
LOFT
OH...MY...
GHAAADDD!

WILLYA LOOKIT THAT! WHAT A CRAZY ACCIDENT...
SELENA, THIS IS YOUR FAULT! IF WE'DA HAD THOSE LAWN CHAIRS...
OKAY, POLICE, LET'S BREAK THIS UP..
NOW, YOU SAY YOU HAD THIS THING TIED ON TO YOUR ROOF?
OH BOBBY, YOU JERK, YOU JERK..
PLEASE... I HAVE TO COME THROUGH...
LEMME SEE THAT LICENSE.
CRAZIEST THING I EVER SAW...
MRS. CABLE?
DO YOU MIND IF I WALK WITH YOU A WHILE? WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS.
WE DO, HUH?
OKAY.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
WHO THE HELL INDEED! MAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
FORGIVE ME, MRS. CABLE.
MY NAME IS BLOOD.
JASON BLOOD.

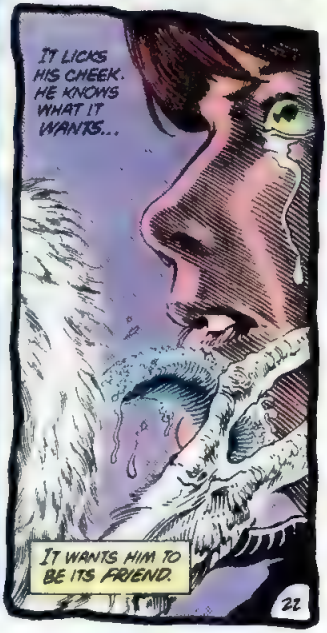
BLOOD ON ITS MUZZLE.
BLOOD ON HIS HANDS WHERE IT KISSED HIM.

HE HAD LAID AWAKE ALL NIGHT, UNMOVING, ITS SICKLY BREATH WARM UPON HIS NECK.
IN THE MORNING, THE MONKEY KING HAD GONE. THE NEIGHBORS CALLED AND FOUND THE BODIES OF HIS PARENTS. THEN THE POLICE CALLED AND FOUND HIM.

THEY TOOK HIM TO THE POLICE STATION, BUT HE COULDN'T TELL THEM ANYTHING.
THEY TOOK HIM TO THE HOSPITAL, BUT THEY COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.
FINALLY, THEY BROUGHT HIM TO ELYSIUM LAWNS...


...AND THEY COULDN'T DO ANYTHING EITHER. THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM WHEN HE TOLD THEM ABOUT THE MONKEY KING.

THEY THOUGHT HE WAS CRAZY.
BUT HE WASN'T.


IT LICKS HIS CHEEK. HE KNOWS WHAT IT WANTS...
IT WANTS HIM TO BE ITS FRIEND.

IT WANTS HIM TO TELL IT WHAT TO DO...
BUT HE CAN'T. HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW.
AND SO IT JUST DOES WHAT IT WANTS..
THE LITTLE GIRL IN THE NEXT ROOM IS CALLED ROBERTA.
AT THE AGE OF FOUR, ROBERTA ACCIDENTALLY SMOTHERED HER INFANT BROTHER WITH A POLYETHYLENE BAG. THAT'S WHY SHE'S HERE.
THE TASTE OF HER FEAR IS BRIGHT AND COPPERY.
IT DRINKS BOTH DEEPLY AND WELL.
IN THE NEXT ROOM IS A BOY NAMED MICHAEL, AND AFTER THAT, JOHN. AND THEN JESSICA AND DELROY AND SIMONE...
THERE ARE MANY CHILDREN, BUT THE NIGHT IS LONG...
...AND IT IS VERY HUNGRY.
El sueño de la razon produce monstruos

next: "...a time of running..."

THE SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING
26
75¢
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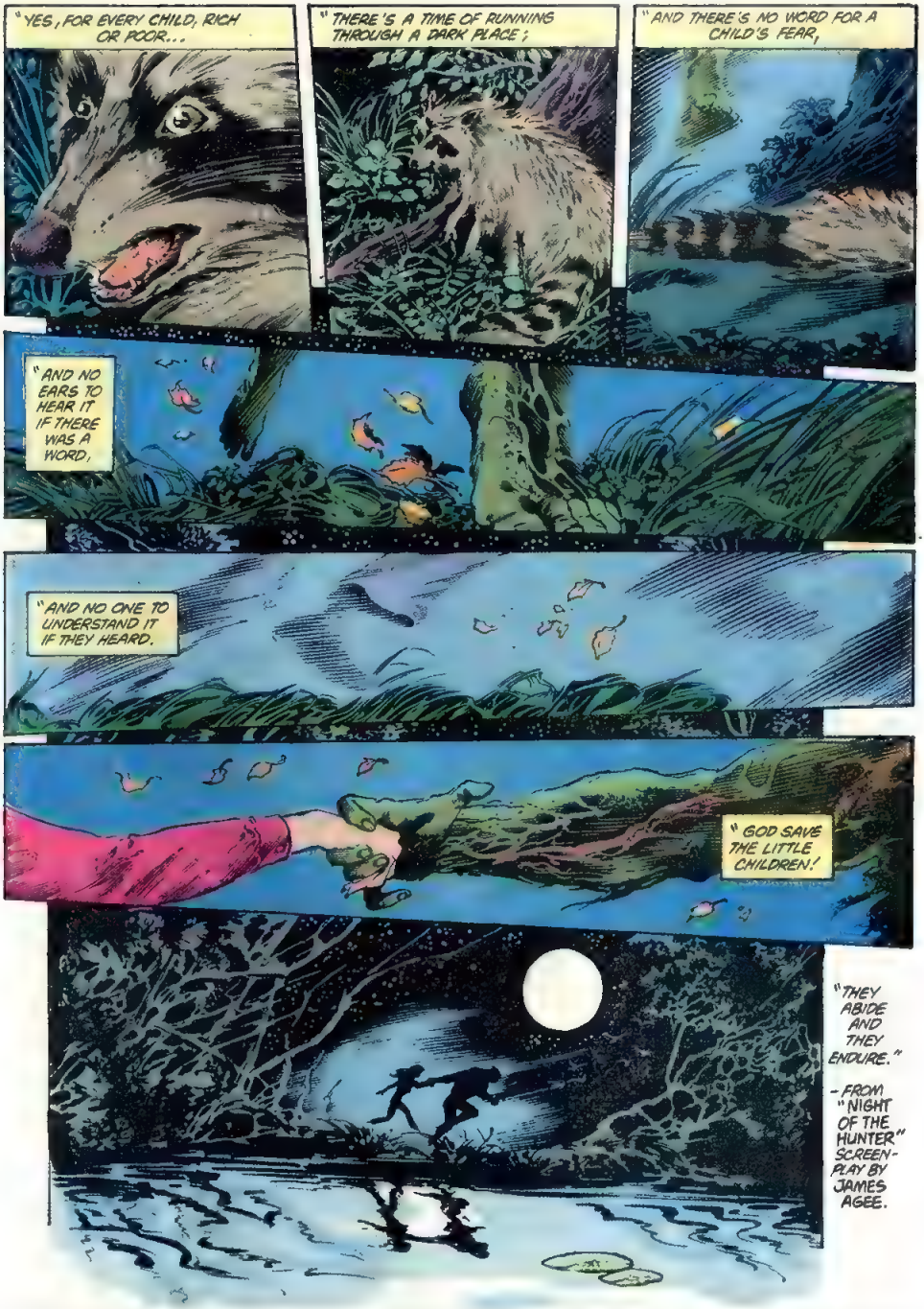
U.K. 30p
JULY 84
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.


"YES, FOR EVERY CHILD, RICH OR POOR...
"THERE'S A TIME OF RUNNING THROUGH A DARK PLACE;
"AND THERE'S NO WORD FOR A CHILD'S FEAR,
"AND NO EARS TO HEAR IT IF THERE WAS A WORD,
"AND NO ONE TO UNDERSTAND IT IF THEY HEARD.
"GOD SAVE THE LITTLE CHILDREN!
"THEY ABIDE AND THEY ENDURE."
- FROM "NIGHT OF THE HUNTER" SCREENPLAY BY JAMES AGEE.

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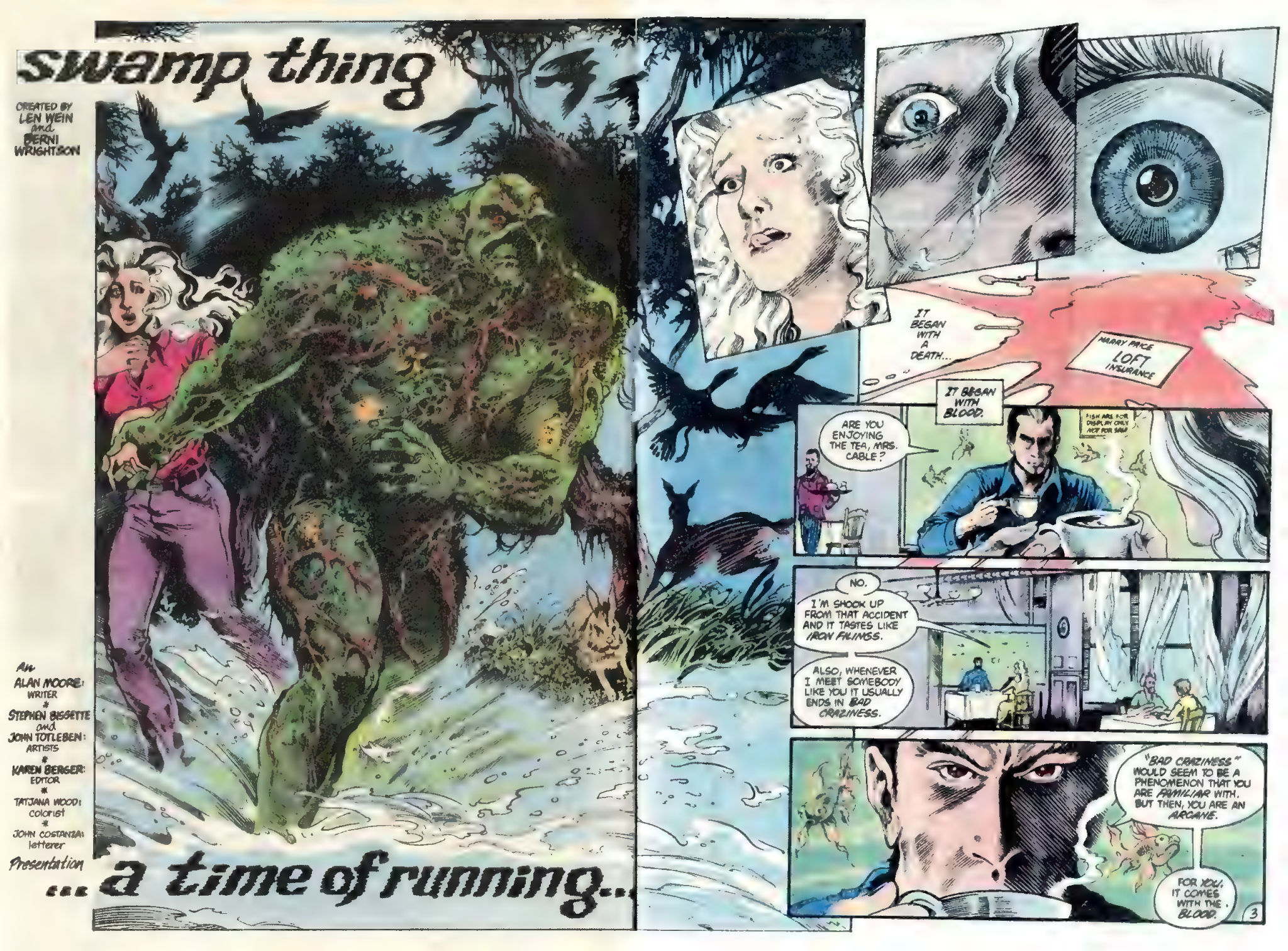
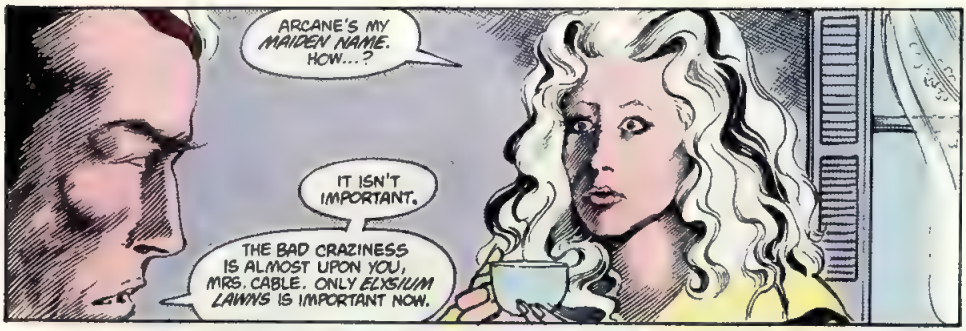
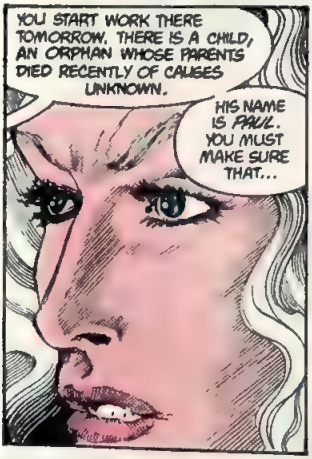

swamp thing
CREATED BY LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON
An ALAN MOORE: WRITER
STEPHEN BISSETTE and JOHN TOTLEBEN: ARTISTS
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR
TATJANA WOOD: colorist
JOHN COSTANZA: letterer
Presentation
... a time of running...
IT BEGAN WITH A DEATH...
HARRY PACE LOFT INSURANCE
IT BEGAN WITH BLOOD.
ARE YOU ENJOYING THE TEA, MRS. CABLE?
FISH ARE FOR DISPLAY ONLY NOT FOR SALE
NO.
I'M SHOOK UP FROM THAT ACCIDENT AND IT TASTES LIKE IRON FILINGS.
ALSO, WHENEVER I MEET SOMEBODY LIKE YOU IT USUALLY ENDS IN BAD CRAZINESS.
"BAD CRAZINESS" WOULD SEEM TO BE A PHENOMENON THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH. BUT THEN, YOU ARE AN ARCANE.
FOR YOU, IT COMES WITH THE BLOOD.
3


ARCANE'S MY MAIDEN NAME. HOW...?
IT ISN'T IMPORTANT.
THE BAD CRAZINESS IS ALMOST UPON YOU, MRS. CABLE. ONLY ELYSIUM LAWNS IS IMPORTANT NOW.


YOU START WORK THERE TOMORROW. THERE IS A CHILD, AN ORPHAN WHOSE PARENTS DIED RECENTLY OF CAUSES UNKNOWN.
HIS NAME IS PAUL. YOU MUST MAKE SURE THAT...

ISN'T THERE EVEN A CORNER OF MY LIFE THAT'S SAFE FROM ALL THIS WEIRDNESS?
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE OR HOW YOU KNOW ABOUT ME, BUT YOU JUST KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ELYSIUM LAWNS!

YOUR SELF-PITY INTERESTS ME NOT EVEN SLIGHTLY.
IT IS THE CHILDREN WHO ARE IN DANGER. WATCH OVER THEM, WOMAN. TRY TO SAVE AS MANY AS YOU CAN.
FOR YOU KNOW LESS THAN THEY OF MADNESS...

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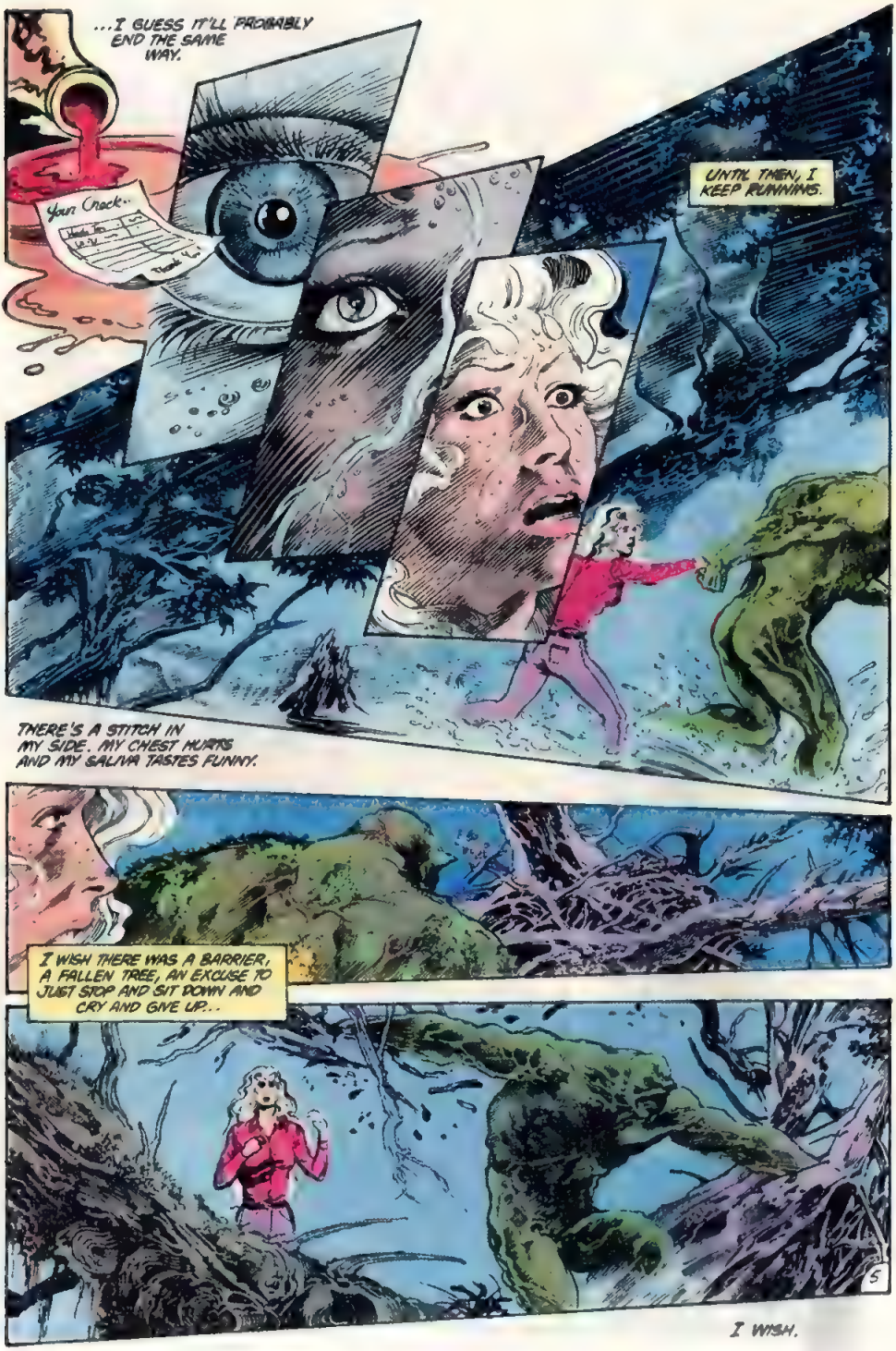
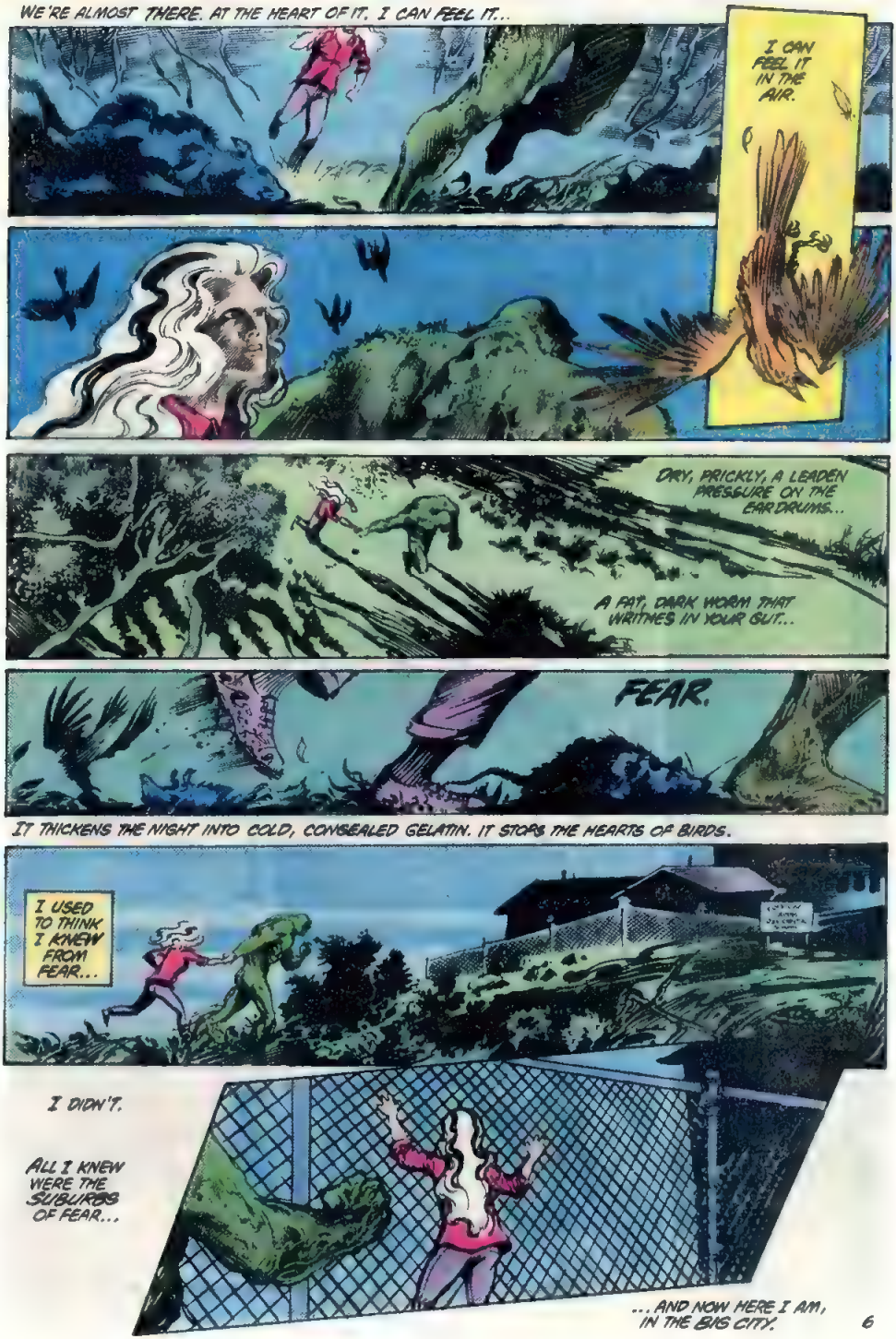
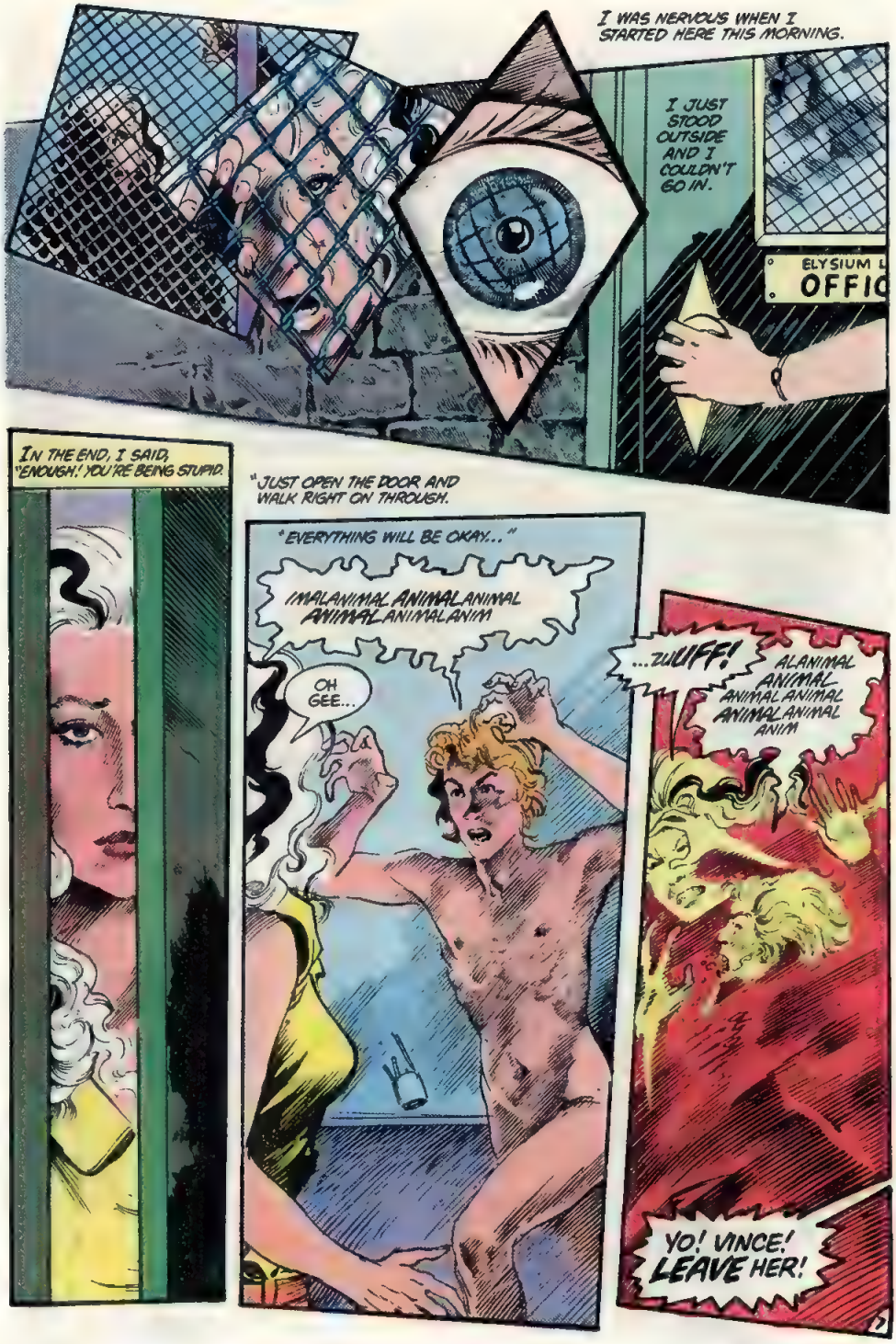

...I GUESS IT'LL PROBABLY END THE SAME WAY.
Your Check...
UNTIL THEN, I KEEP RUNNING.
THERE'S A STITCH IN MY SIDE. MY CHEST HURTS AND MY SALIVA TASTES FUNNY.
I WISH THERE WAS A BARRIER, A FALLEN TREE, AN EXCUSE TO JUST STOP AND SIT DOWN AND CRY AND GIVE UP...
5
I WISH.


WE'RE ALMOST THERE. AT THE HEART OF IT. I CAN FEEL IT...
I CAN FEEL IT IN THE AIR.
DRY, PRICKLY. A LEADEN PRESSURE ON THE EARDRUMS...
A FAT, DARK WORM THAT WRITHES IN YOUR GUT...
FEAR.
IT THICKENS THE NIGHT INTO COLD, CONGEALED GELATIN. IT STOPS THE HEARTS OF BIRDS.
I USED TO THINK I KNEW FROM FEAR...
I DIDN'T.
ALL I KNEW WERE THE SUBURBS OF FEAR...
... AND NOW HERE I AM, IN THE BIG CITY.


I WAS NERVOUS WHEN I STARTED HERE THIS MORNING.
I JUST STOOD OUTSIDE AND I COULDN'T GO IN.
ELYSIUM
OFFIC
IN THE END, I SAID, "ENOUGH! YOU'RE BEING STUPID.
"JUST OPEN THE DOOR AND WALK RIGHT ON THROUGH.
"EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY..."
IMALANIMAL ANIMAL ANIMAL ANIMAL ANIMAL ANIM
OH GEE...
...ZUUIFF!
ALANIMAL ANIMAL ANIMAL ANIMAL ANIMAL ANIM
YO! VINCE! LEAVE HER!

JEEZ, I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, LADY..
VINCE? IT'S OKAY... STRAIGHTEN OUT, MAN...
JOHN, WE BETTER GET HIM INTO THE MAT...
MALANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMALANIMAL ANIM
THERE Y'GO...
VINCE, LISTEN, IT'S OKAY...
HELP ME SIT ON THIS THING, WILLYA?
ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALANIMAL ANIMALAN
HERE, LET ME...
YOU'RE ABBY, RIGHT? ABBY CABLE?
UH...YEAH, YOU'RE...?
TIM. TIM CARBURTON. I KNEW IT WAS YOU. DEANNA TOLD US ABOUT THE HAIR...
NICE HAIR Y'GOT, MS. CABLE.
WELL, UH, THANKS, TIM. SAY, WHO WAS THAT GUY WHO...
OH, THAT'S VINCE. HE'LL BE OKAY NOW HE'S IN THE MAT.
MAYBE THRASH AROUND FOR AN HOUR OR TWO, BUT HE WON'T DAMAGE HIMSELF.
THEY'RE ALL CUTTIN' LOOSE THIS MORNING.
YOU SURE PICKED A TERRIFIC DAY TO START WORK.
EXIT
8

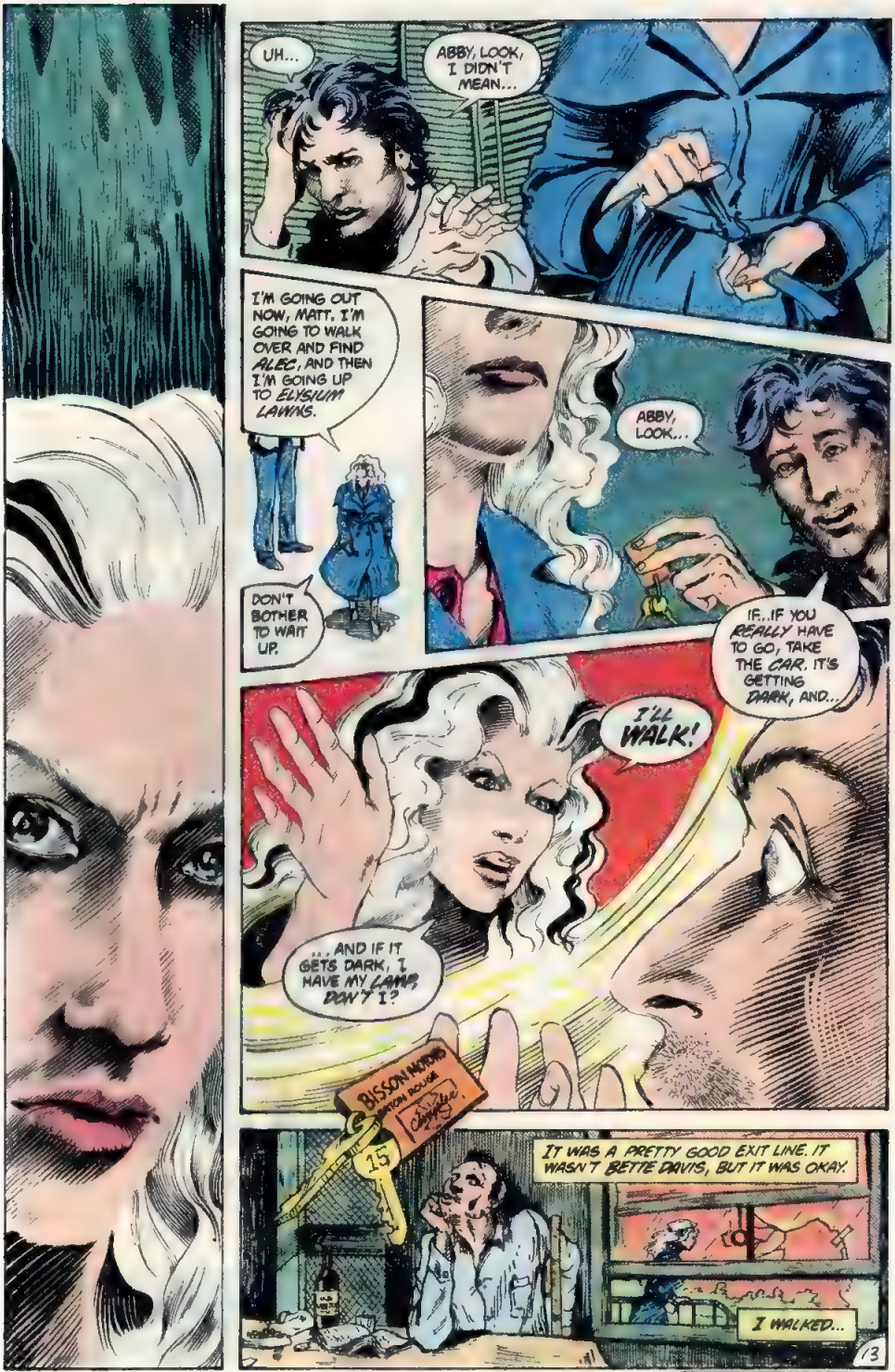
I SURE DID.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "NO MORE MATS"?
WELL, I DUNNO' GET A MATTRESS OFF ONE OF THE KIDS' BEDS OR SOMETHING!
COME ON, MAN!
THAT OUGHT TO HOLD HER.
LORD KNOWS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RUN OUT OF MATTRESSES. A LOT OF THE KIDS DIRTIED THEM UP IN THE NIGHT...
C'MON. LET'S GO THROUGH TO MY OFFICE...
I'VE NEVER SEEN THE KIDS LIKE THIS. ONE OR TWO GET RECKLESS FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT THIS IS ALL OF THEM!
HEY, WANT TO SEE SOMETHING WEIRD?
THIS IS A DRAWING THAT A KID CALLED CRAIG DID THIS MORNING.
HERE'S ANOTHER BY HELEN, WHO YOU JUST MET. ONE BY EMMA JEAN, ONE BY JOSÉ...
NOTICE ANYTHING?
MONKEYS?
RIGHT.
BUT I THOUGHT THERE WAS ONLY ONE KID OBSESSED WITH MONKEYS. YOU SHOWED ME HIS BOOKS AT MY INTERVIEW. SMALL, WASN'T IT?

IT WAS.
PAUL?
HOW'S IT GOING? YOU REMEMBER ME? ABIGAIL?
A-B-I-G-A-I-L.
HELLO, ABIGAIL.
YOU KNOW, YOU'LL DIE PRETTY SOON.
HUH?
IT'LL JUST SCARE YOU TO DEATH. D-E-A-T-H. WHATEVER YOU'RE SCARED OF, THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
PLEASE REPLACE TOYS AFTER PLAY
SPIDERS, I BET. MOST GIRLS ARE SCARED OF SPIDERS.
S-P-I-D-E-R-S.
ROBERTA SAID IT LOOKED LIKE HER KID BROTHER, ONLY HE WAS ALL BLUE. R-O-B-E-R-T-A.
PAUL? PAUL, WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?
YOU KNOW.
THE MONKEY KING.
PAUL'S TALKING ABOUT THE MONKEY KING...
...BUT NOBODY BELIEVES HIM.
10

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

I BELIEVE YOU, PAUL...
...NOW WHO'S GOING TO BELIEVE ME?
15

ABBY, I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
MOTOR INN
Mesler's Milky Way
YOU JUST GOT HOME FROM THAT MADHOUSE!
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GO BACK?
MATT! IT IS NOT A MADHOUSE! THEY'RE KIDS!
DON'T YOU DARE CALL IT A MADHOUSE!
ONE OF 'EM BIT YOU ON THE LEG, ABBY!
ONE OF 'EM SWORE AT YOU AND ALMOST RIPPED YOUR HAIR OUT.
THEY THROW UP THEIR FOOD, THEY DON'T KEEP THEMSELVES CLEAN...
THEY'RE KIDS!
THEY NEED SOMEBODY...
...AND THEY NEED SOMEBODY TONIGHT!
AND WHAT IF I NEED SOMEBODY TONIGHT?
OR IS FLORENCE AMEATHYSTLE ABOVE THAT KIND OF STUFF?


UH...
ABBY, LOOK, I DIDN'T MEAN...
I'M GOING OUT NOW, MATT. I'M GOING TO WALK OVER AND FIND ALEC, AND THEN I'M GOING UP TO ELYSIUM LAWNS.
DON'T BOTHER TO WAIT UP.
ABBY, LOOK...
IF...IF YOU REALLY HAVE TO GO, TAKE THE CAR. IT'S GETTING DARK, AND...
I'LL WALK!
...AND IF IT GETS DARK, I HAVE MY LAMB, DON'T I?
BISSON HOTEL
15
IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD EXIT LINE. IT WASN'T BETTE DAVIS, BUT IT WAS OKAY.
I WALKED...
13

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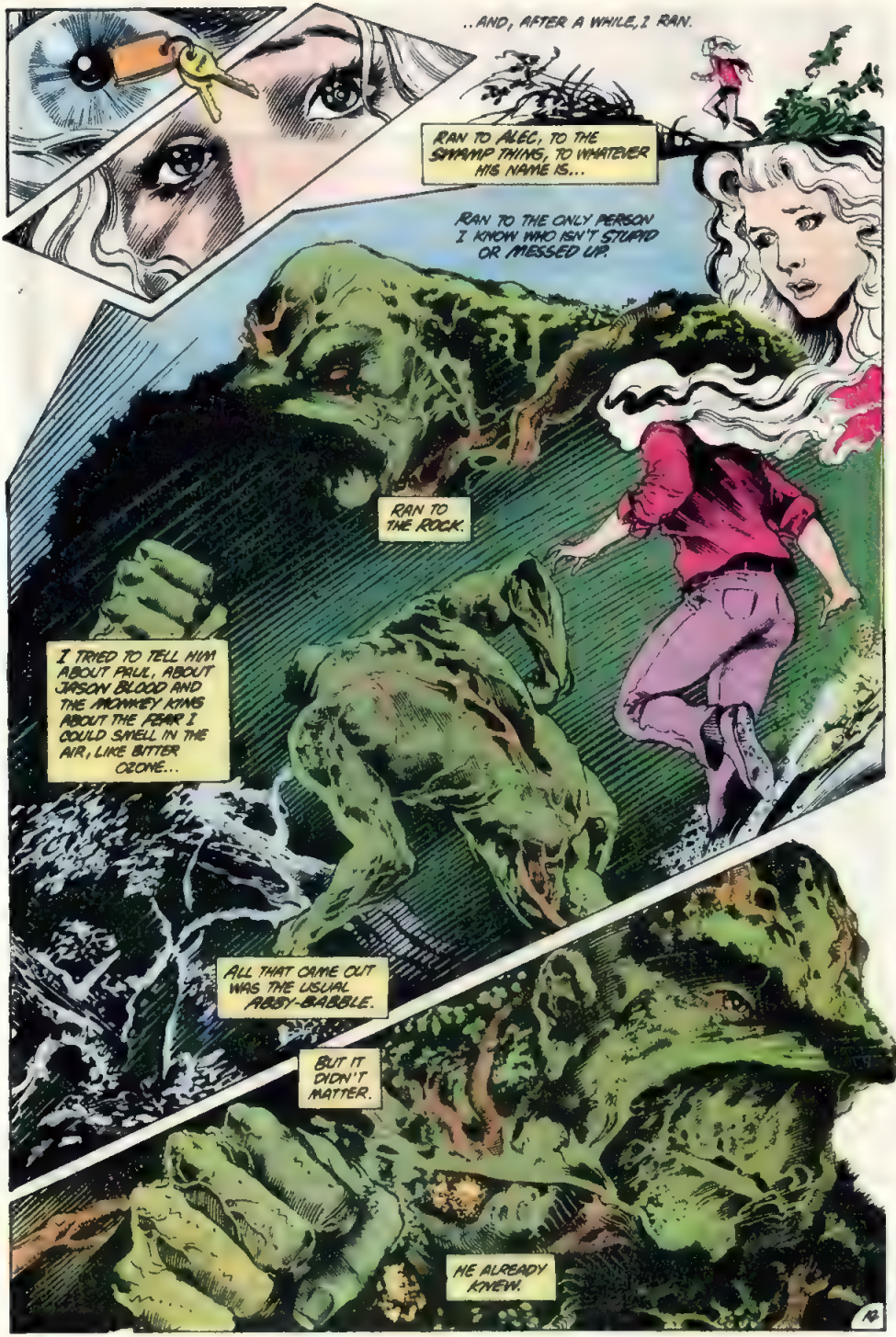
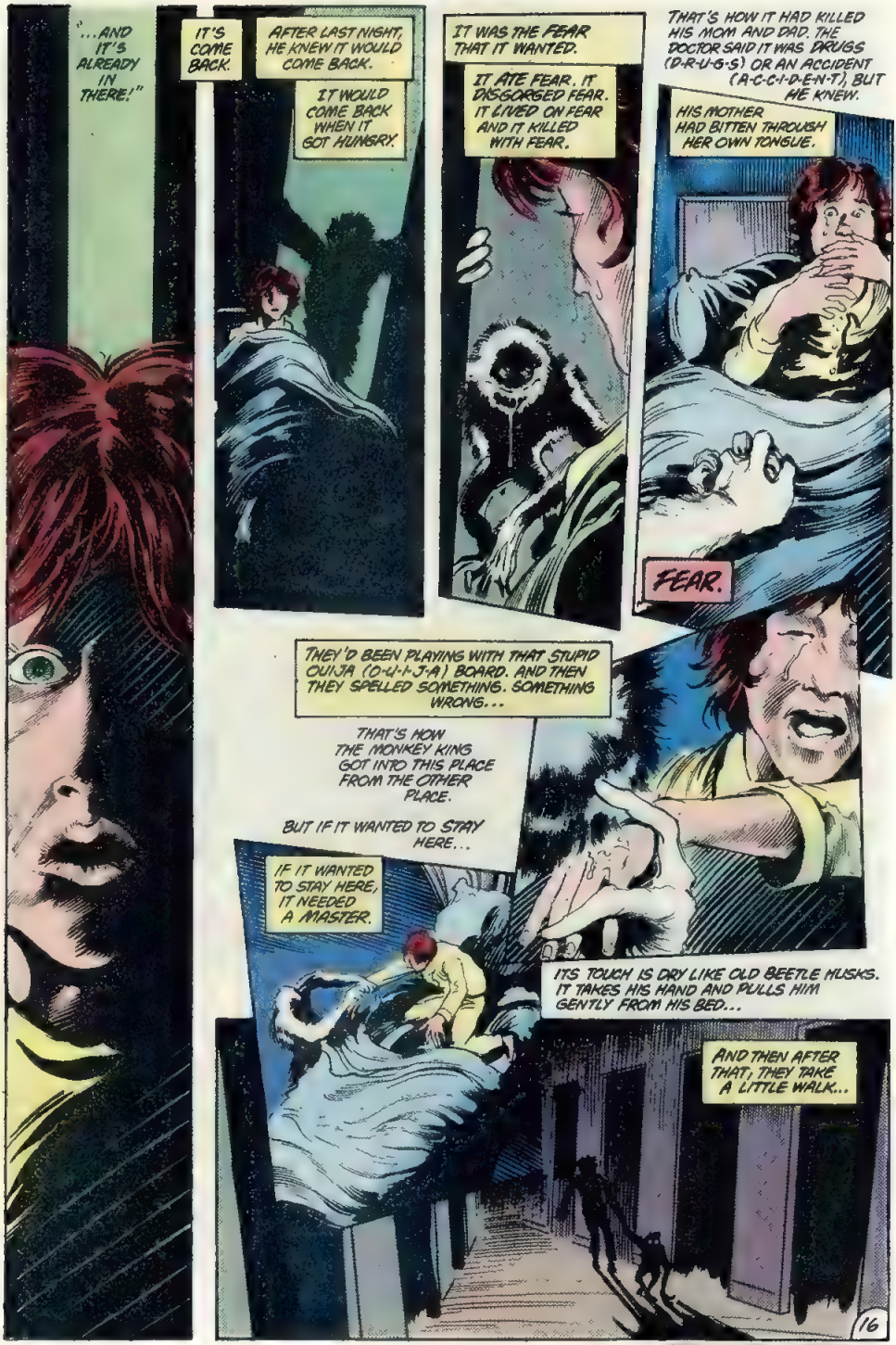
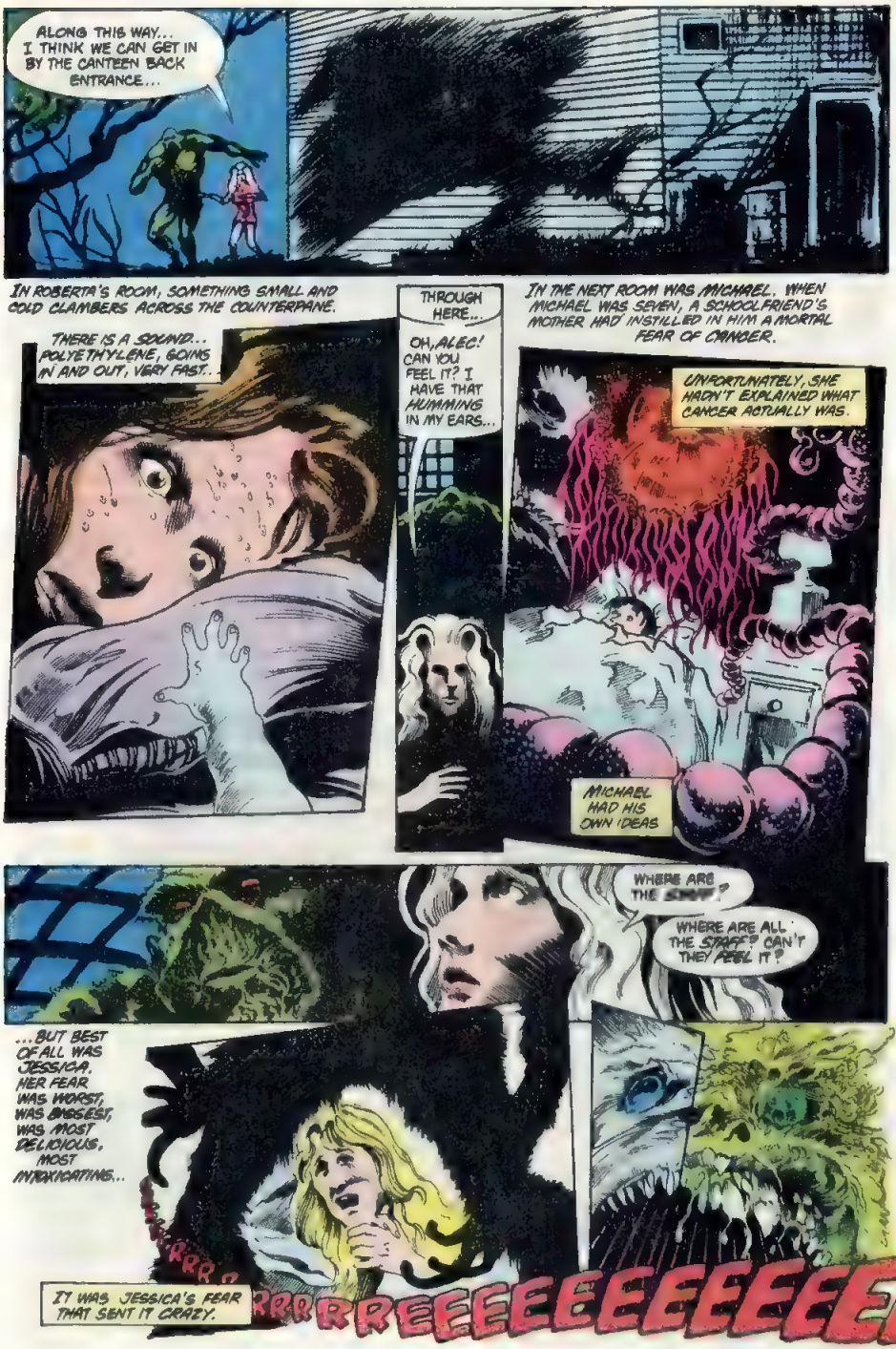

..AND, AFTER A WHILE, I RAN.
RAN TO ALEC, TO THE SWAMP THING, TO WHATEVER HIS NAME IS...
RAN TO THE ONLY PERSON I KNOW WHO ISN'T STUPID OR MESSED UP.
RAN TO THE ROCK.
I TRIED TO TELL HIM ABOUT PAUL, ABOUT JASON BLOOD AND THE ANKHKEY KING ABOUT THE FEAR I COULD SMELL IN THE AIR, LIKE BITTER OZONE...
ALL THAT CAME OUT WAS THE USUAL ABBY-BABBLE.
BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER.
HE ALREADY KNEW.
42

I THINK HE KNEW MORE THAN ME, ABOUT HOW BAD THINGS WERE.
HE MADE US RUN ALL THE WAY HERE...
THAT MUST MEAN IT'S NOT TOO LATE, MUSTN'T IT?
HE WOULDN'T HAVE MADE US RUN IF IT HAD ALREADY BEEN TOO LATE...
...WOULD HE?
HE'D FELT IT, TOO..
FELT IT IN THE SOIL, IN THE WIND.
HE'D SEEN IT IN THE FLIGHT OF THE BIRDS AND IN THE EYES OF THE 'GATORS...
OFFICE
WE'RE TOO LATE.
WE CAN FEEL IT.
OH GOD, I CAN FEEL IT TOO.' WE RAN ALL THAT WAY...
HE KNEW
15


"...AND IT'S ALREADY IN THERE!"
IT'S COME BACK.
AFTER LAST NIGHT, HE KNEW IT WOULD COME BACK.
IT WOULD COME BACK WHEN IT GOT HUNGRY.
IT WAS THE FEAR THAT IT WANTED.
IT ATE FEAR. IT DISGORGED FEAR. IT LIVED ON FEAR AND IT KILLED WITH FEAR.
THAT'S HOW IT HAD KILLED HIS MOM AND DAD. THE DOCTOR SAID IT WAS DRUGS (D-R-U-G-S) OR AN ACCIDENT (A-C-C-I-D-E-N-T), BUT HE KNEW.
HIS MOTHER HAD BITTEN THROUGH HER OWN TONGUE.
FEAR.
THEY'D BEEN PLAYING WITH THAT STUPID OUIJA (O-U-I-J-A) BOARD. AND THEN THEY SPELLED SOMETHING. SOMETHING WRONG...
THAT'S HOW THE MONKEY KING GOT INTO THIS PLACE FROM THE OTHER PLACE.
BUT IF IT WANTED TO STAY HERE...
IF IT WANTED TO STAY HERE, IT NEEDED A MASTER.
ITS TOUCH IS DRY LIKE OLD BEETLE MUSKS. IT TAKES HIS HAND AND PULLS HIM GENTLY FROM HIS BED...
AND THEN AFTER THAT, THEY TAKE A LITTLE WALK...
16
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

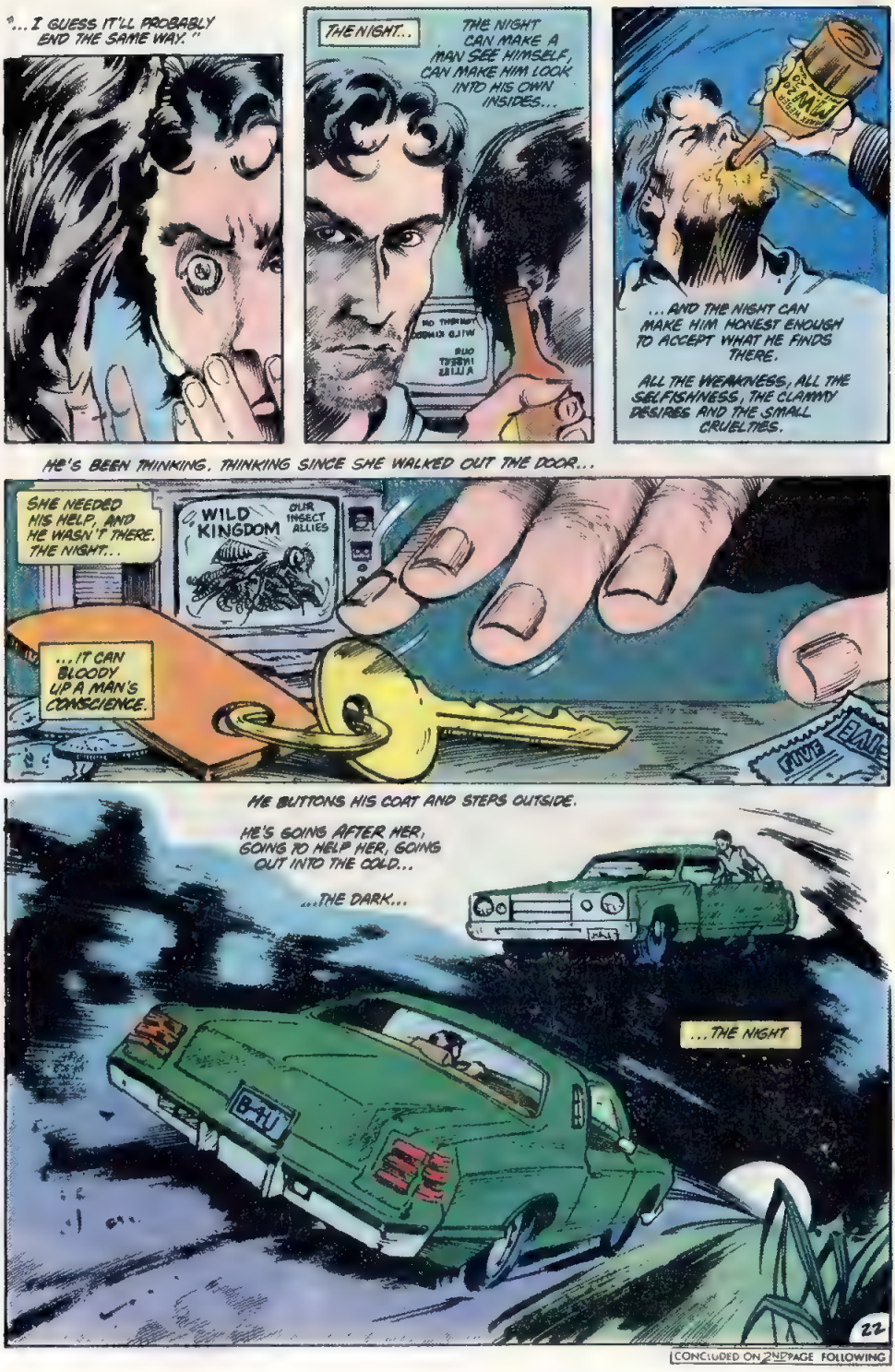

ALONG THIS WAY... I THINK WE CAN GET IN BY THE CANTEEN BACK ENTRANCE...
IN ROBERTA'S ROOM, SOMETHING SMALL AND COLD CLAMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTERPANE.
THERE IS A SOUND... POLYETHYLENE, GOING IN AND OUT, VERY FAST..
THROUGH HERE...
OH, ALEC! CAN YOU FEEL IT? I HAVE THAT HUMMING IN MY EARS...
IN THE NEXT ROOM WAS MICHAEL. WHEN MICHAEL WAS SEVEN, A SCHOOLFRIEND'S MOTHER HAD INSTILLED IN HIM A MORTAL FEAR OF CANCER.
UNFORTUNATELY, SHE HADN'T EXPLAINED WHAT CANCER ACTUALLY WAS.
MICHAEL HAD HIS OWN IDEAS
WHERE ARE THE STAFF?
WHERE ARE ALL THE STAFF? CAN'T THEY FEEL IT?
...BUT BEST OF ALL WAS JESSICA. HER FEAR WAS WORST, WAS BIGGEST, WAS MOST DELICIOUS, MOST INTOXICATING...
IT WAS JESSICA'S FEAR THAT SENT IT CRAZY.
RRRREEEEEEEEEEEE

EEEE

"NOT A HOPE IN HELL."
SO...
THE TOYS ABOUT THE NURSERY ARE SET, FOR IDIOT CHAOS TO ARRANGE AT WHIM. HE DROOLS AND RUINS LIVES; HIS CHIN IS WET AND OLD OR YOUNG...
...IT MATTERS NOT TO HIM.

"THE GRACIOUS LADY AND HER ROOT-CHOKED BEAST HAVE COME TO SAVE THE INNOCENTS FROM HARM, TO SPARE THEM FROM THE MONKEY'S DREADFUL FEAST. WHAT NOBLE SOULS THEY HAVE! WHAT FAITH! WHAT CHARM!
"AND SEE! THE CHILDREN'S UPROAR BRINGS TO LIFE THEIR GUARDIANS: THAT MOST DEDICATED BREED! YET SHE BETRAYS HER HUSBAND, HE HIS WIFE, THOUGH BOTH OF THEM ARE KIND TO BABES IN NEED."
SHOULD INNOCENCE BE MOLLYCODDLED THUS? I FAIL TO SEE THE REASON FOR THE FUSS.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
I AM THE ONE WHO COMES TO CASE THE APE. I PAY NO HEED TO YOUTH OR PURITY. I'LL ROAST EACH FOOL THAT AIDS THE BEAST'S ESCAPE, AND DRINK THEIR HEALTH TONIGHT IN PURGAT'RY!
INNOCENTS? WHY, TO HEAR THE TALES THEY TELL...
...YOU'D THINK THERE WAS NO GUILTY CHILD IN HELL!
FEAST, JACK-AN-APE! EAT HEARTY WHILE YOU CAN...

UPON YOUR NECK'S THE BREATH OF ETRIGAN!
IT BEGAN WITH DEATH.
IT BEGAN WITH BLOOD...
21


"...I GUESS IT'LL PROBABLY END THE SAME WAY."
THE NIGHT..
THE NIGHT CAN MAKE A MAN SEE HIMSELF, CAN MAKE HIM LOOK INTO HIS OWN INSIDES...
...AND THE NIGHT CAN MAKE HIM HONEST ENOUGH TO ACCEPT WHAT HE FINDS THERE.
ALL THE WEAKNESS, ALL THE SELFISHNESS, THE CLAMMY DESIRES AND THE SMALL CRUELTIES.
HE'S BEEN THINKING. THINKING SINCE SHE WALKED OUT THE DOOR...
SHE NEEDED HIS HELP, AND HE WASN'T THERE. THE NIGHT...
WILD KINGDOM
OUR INSECT ALLIES
...IT CAN BLOODY UP A MAN'S CONSCIENCE.
HE BUTTONS HIS COAT AND STEPS OUTSIDE.
HE'S GOING AFTER HER, GOING TO HELP HER, GOING OUT INTO THE COLD...
...THE DARK...
...THE NIGHT
B-U
22
CONCLUDED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

THE NIGHT CAN MAKE A MAN MORE BRAVE...
... BUT NOT MORE SOBER.
BURMA SHAVE
next: BY DEMONS DRIVEN...

DC
The SAGA of The
SWAMP THING
75¢
27
AUG 84
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BY
ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN
BISSETTE '89
TOTLEBEN '89

"THE FROZEN TABLEAU, CRYSTALLIZED IN TIME, HANGS POISED, LIKE SPILLED BLOOD YET TO REACH THE GROUND.

"THE TERROR OF THE AUDIENCE TURNS TO MIME; THEIR SCREAMING MASKS MAKE NOT THE SLIGHTEST SOUND.

"A GOURMET OF DESPAIR, IT GIVES ME PLEASURE TO CHEW UPON THIS INSTANT AT MY LEISURE.

"SEE HERE, THE POOR BEWILDERED ORPHAN-BOY, WHOSE PARENTS SET THE MONKEY-DEVIL FREE, PERCEIVING MAGIC AS SOME PARLOR-TOY THEIR LIVES WERE FORFEIT, AND HIS SANITY.

"AND HERE BEHOLD THAT PESTILENTIAL APE; ITS GRIP UPON HIS ARM COULD NOT BE FASTER.

"ITS NAME IS FEAR. LIKE FEAR IT ALTERS SHAPE, AND YET IT LICKS HIS HAND AND CALLS HIM MASTER.

"AS FOR THESE SHRIEKING STATUES, I'LL NOT WEEP. THEY'LL PERISH AS THEY'VE LIVED: DAZED, WITLESS SHEEP...

"...IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES FAR BEYOND THEIR KEN. I SHED NO TEAR FOR THOSE THAT DIE UNSHRIVEN...

"...FOR THEY ARE MEN.

"JUST MEN.

"AND WHAT ARE MEN BUT CHARIOTS OF WRATH...

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DC Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

"...BY DEMONS DRIVEN!"

SWAMP THING

created by
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and
BERNI WRIGHTSON

an
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ARTISTS

KAREN BERGER
EDITOR

TATJANA WOOD
COLORIST

JOHN COSTANZA
LETTERER

Presentation

"THE BATTLE IS ENGAGED, THE MOMENT GONE. DRAW BACK THE CURTAIN! DIM THE LIGHTS...

"PLAY ON!"

ALEC, THOSE *CREATURES*...

OH, GOD. THIS HOME'S FULL OF *CHILDREN*. I'M SUPPOSED TO LOOK *AFTER* THEM.

LOOKING AFTER THEM'S *MY JOB*.

THE *MONKEY'S* GOT HOLD OF *PAUL*...

WE'VE GOT TO...

"...DO SOMETHING?"

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

RRRRRRR!!!
AUUURRRRRR

ARK

BUT YOU... WHAT ABOUT YOU?

THERE ARE THOSE TWO MONSTERS, AND...

SSKRR

"ABBY...?"

ABBY?

WH-WHERE ARE YOU, ABBY?

OFF WITH THE KIDS, I BET. ALWAYS OFF WITH THE KIDS...

IT WAS ME WHO NEEDED YOU. IT WAS...

SHAVE

HUH? DO YOU HEAR THAT? THAT BUZZING? IS THAT A FLY..?

I KNOW WE ARGUED, BUT I WAS SORRY... I CAME AFTER YOU, TO HELP. A LITTLE DRUNK... CURVE TOO FAST...

WHOSE IS ALL THIS BLOOD, ABBY?

OH GOD, OH MOTHER, I DON'T WANT TO DIE...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO.

AAH.

I CAN SEE THAT I HAVE ALARMED YOU. PLEASE... FEEL FREE TO SCREAM IF YOU WANT TO.

THERE IS NO ONE TO HEAR, AND I SHALL STILL BE HERE WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED.

"DAMN YOU TO HELL, MATT CABLE."

DAMN YOU FOR MAKING ME DO THIS ON MY OWN.

PAUL, TRY TO RUN...

PLEASE, PAUL...

THE MONKEY KING. IT CAME.

M-O-N-K-E-Y K-I-

YES, OKAY! I KNOW HOW TO SPELL MONKEY KING.!!

OH NO.

OH, LOOK, PAUL... I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SHOUT.

PAUL, I'M SCARED TOO.

THUS FEAR BREEDS ANGER, WHICH IN TURN BREEDS FEAR. THIS CANCER MUST BE CURBED...

...MY CHOICE IS CLEAR.

THE APE IS BATTLING WITH THE THING OF MOSS, HIS SMALL, RELUCTANT MASTER QUITE FORGOT.

SOON IT WILL PAUSE AND REALIZE ITS LOSS. ITS HOWL WILL COME TOO LATE, AND MATTERS NOT.

BY THEN, THE CHILD THAT *BINDS* IT TO THIS PLANE SHALL BE *CONSUMED*...

NO! YOU CAN'T..

SHUK!!

...AND NOTHING SHALL REMAIN.

FEAR NOT, FOR PAIN IS SHORT AND DEATH IS LONG, THOUGH AS TO WHAT DREAMS FOLLOW, LEGENDS *VARY*.

SHRIEK!!

THEY ALSO SUFFER, THOSE THAT DO NO WRONG. YOUR DEATH IS *SMALL*...

...BUT IT IS NECESS..

EH?

KRUNCH

SO...

...YOU ESCAPED THE MONKEY'S FESTERING CLUTCH. PERHAPS YOU HAD NO *FEAR* FOR IT TO USE?

I'LL OWN, IT DOES NOT INTEREST ME MUCH. YOU PLAY DICE WITH A *DEMON*, SIR...

...AND LOSE.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

SPUK KWIKT PNOP
PUNP PUP PNOP
CHRRUTT
11

DON'T WORRY, PAUL.

DON'T WORRY.

DON'T WORRY.

THE BIG GREEN MAN, HE'S MY FRIEND. HE WON'T LET ANYTHING HURT US.

YOU'LL SEE. YOU'LL...

SPLAT

"CAN'T SCREAM ANYMORE?

"GOOD."

PERHAPS YOU'LL LISTEN TO MY PROPOSAL NOW, MR. CABLE...

...OR MAY I CALL YOU "MATTHEW"?

OH NO.

OH NO.

OH GOD...

YOUR BODY IS QUITE SMASHED, I'M AFRAID. I FEAR THAT YOU WILL BLEED TO DEATH WITHIN THE HOUR...

...UNLESS YOU PREFER NOT TO, IN WHICH CASE I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.

YOU'RE NOT REAL... YOU'RE AN HALLUCINATION...

BUT OF COURSE I'M AN HALLUCINATION. SO THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, IS THERE?

OH ABBY... ABBY...

NO.

NO, I GUESS NOT.

PLEASE... I WANT TO LIVE. I HAVE A WIFE...

YES, OF COURSE YOU DO. OF COURSE...

NOW, IF YOU WANT TO SEE HER AGAIN, I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING RATHER UNPLEASANT FIRST.

IT'S ALWAYS THE WAY WITH THESE THINGS, AND IT WON'T TAKE LONG...

WH-WHAT SHOULD I DO?

WELL, YOU'LL HAVE TO OPEN YOUR MOUTH AS WIDE AS IT WILL GO...

OH YES, THAT'S SPLENDID..

THAT'S JUST RIGHT.

NOW, THIS NEXT BIT WILL BE THE WORST...

"THERE.

"THAT WASN'T SO BAD, WAS IT?

"NOW FOR MY SIDE OF THE BARGAIN...

ZZZZ

WHATEVER YOU'RE AFRAID OF...

SEE PAGE FOLLOWING

"...THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE."

NNNUGH..

AAA...BEEE...

AAAA-BEEE...

I... LLUHV... YUUU...

AAAA-BEEEE...

NO! LEAVE HER ALONE!

YOU KILLED MY MOM AND YOU KILLED MY DAD, BUT...

...BUT I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU!!

PUH...

PUUHHH..

PUH...

PAW.. LEEEE...

IT'SSS M'MO-MMEEE...

NO! YOU'RE NOT MY MOM! MY MOM IS D-E-A-D!

YOU'RE A SCUMMY LITTLE MONKEY AND YOU DON'T SCARE ME!

YOU'RE A LIAR!

YOU JUST PRETEND TO BE THINGS!

WELL, YOU CAN PRETEND TO BE A SNAKE OR A WOLF OR A MONSTER AND I DON'T CARE!

YOU'RE NOT FRIGHTENING ME!

LITTLE KITTENS ARE SCARIER THAN YOU!

YOU'RE NOT AS SCARY AS A MOUSE! NOT EVEN AS SCARY AS...

...AS A BUG.

AAH...

FEAR, NO MATTER HOW SMALL IT HAS GROWN...

...RETAINS A CERTAIN FLAVOR OF ITS OWN.

16

CONTINUED ON 24th PAGE FOLLOWING

THE APE IS CAGED. IT SEEMS WHERE DEMONS FAIL AND MONSTERS FALTER...

...ANGELS MAY PREVAIL.

YOU HAVE MY THANKS. ONE *WARNING* I'LL AFFORD:

YOUR PARENTS FREED THE MONKEY WITH A CHARM SPELLED OUT IN RANDOM LETTERS ON A BOARD. WAS THERE SOME *FURTHER* FIEND THAT NUDGED THEIR ARM?

THE *ANSWER*, MADAM, IS FOR *YOU* TO KNOW.

I'VE SAID TOO MUCH...

MY JOB IS DONE.

I GO.

WAIT!

WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

ABBY...?

ALEC, HE WAS TALKING ABOUT *ME!* I'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT HE *MEANT*...

CAN YOU TAKE PAUL BACK TO *ELYSIUM* LAWAS?

BUT...

PLEASE, ALEC...

THIS IS SOMETHING *IMMORTANT*, I CAN *FEEL* IT.

I'VE GOT TO *KNOW*, ALEC.

SCARED?

NO.

NOT ANYMORE.

CAN I GO HOME NOW, PLEASE?

WERE YOU SCARED WHEN THE MONKEY KING JUMPED ON YOU?

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

I... SAW FIRE...

ONCE I... KNEW SOMEONE ..WHO DIED... BY FIRE. .

AND YOU WERE AFRAID?

YES...

...A LITTLE...

THAT'S GOOD. I MEAN, Y'KNOW. IT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER.

I MEAN, IF EVEN MONSTERS GET SCARED SOMETIMES, THEN...

WELL, THEN IT ISN'T SO BAD, IS IT?

NO...

IT ISN'T SO BAD...

MRS. CABLE...?
YOU MUST... FORGIVE ME. I AM... INDISPOSED...
YOU...
YOU AND THAT DEMON.
YOU'RE THE SAME PERSON.
YES...
YES, I SUPPOSE WE ARE...

IT HASN'T *ALWAYS* BEEN THIS WAY. ONCE WE WERE *VERY* DIFFERENT, OUR PSYCHES CONSTANTLY AT WAR...

WE STRUCK A *BARGAIN*... A SPIRITUAL *COMPROMISE*. WE WOULD GROW MORE *LIKE* EACH OTHER. THERE WOULD BE A BALANCE...

...BUT A BARGAIN WITH A *DEMON* IS NO BARGAIN AT ALL. DEMONS *CHEAT*. IT IS THEIR *NATURE*.

OH, YES, *I* HAVE GROWN MORE LIKE *ETRIGAN*.

AND HE...

...HE *TOO* HAS GROWN MORE LIKE *ETRIGAN*.

HE HAS MERELY BORROWED A LITTLE OF MY *INTELLECT*, MY *VOCABULARY*. HE HAS NOT CHANGED. WE ARE STILL AT WAR...

...AND I FEAR THAT I AM *LOSING*.

PLEASE...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL OF THIS, BUT...

THE *DEMON*. HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT ME, A *WARNING*...

A WARNING?

I CANNOT HELP YOU, MRS. CABLE.

ETRIGAN KNOWS THINGS THAT I DO NOT. IF HE *WARNED* YOU, YOU'D BEST STAY ON YOUR GUARD. SOMETIMES A DEMON MAY OFFER WORDS OF *WISDOM*. AND SOMETIMES...

...SOMETIMES THEY EVEN TELL THE *TRUTH*.

ELYSIUM LAWNS RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

"ALONG ITS EASTERN EDGE THE SKY'S AFLAME. HE SKULKS BACK TO HIS MUD, HIS FERNS AND STONES...

"IS IT UNEASE HE FEELS, WITHOUT A NAME, OR MERELY AUTUMN GNAWING AT HIS BONES?

"THE THINGS OF SHADOW VANISH WITH THE NIGHT, WORSE HORRORS STILL ARE HERALDED!

CONCLUDED ON 2 PAGE FOLLOWING

"...BY LIGHT."

HELLO, ABBY.

I CAME OUT AFTER YOU. I WANTED TO APOLOGIZE.

I WANTED TO HELP

NEED A RIDE?

*THUS MOLLIFIED SHE GOES, HARSH WORDS FORGIVEN, DOWN HIGHWAYS IN THE DARK...

"...BY DEMONS DRIVEN."

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED WITH AWE & AFFECTION TO JACK KIRBY

NEXT: THE BURIAL

The SAGA of The
SWAMP THING
28
75¢
CAN 95¢
U K 30p
SEPT 84
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SR BISSETTE & TOTLEBEN 1-7-84
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.
BY
ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

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HOW DEEP...?

HOW DEEP... DOES IT HAVE... TO BE? THE SOIL IS... WET.. THE DIGGING... DIFFICULT...

PLUT

...AND I... HAVE BEEN DIGGING... FOR SUCH.. A LONG... TIME...

IT LOOKS NICE IN AUTUMN, DOESN'T IT?

INCIDENTALLY, YOU'RE NOT LOOKING TOO BAD YOURSELF...
ISN'T THIS FUNNY, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR SKIN?
HAS IT HAPPENED BEFORE?
NO... I HAS NOT... IN TOUCH. WITH THE SEASONS... BEFORE...
MMM.
ANYTHING DROPPED OFF YET?
UH...
OH, HEY, LOOK! WHAT'S THAT BIRD?
BLUE... HERON...
ABBY. THINGS ARE GOING. WELL WITH YOU?
OH. SO YOU NOTICED THE CHANGE?
LISTEN, I REALLY OUGHT TO APOLOGIZE... THE WAY I WAS ACTING A COUPLE OF WEEKS BACK.
ALL THAT HAND-WRITING AND STUFF...
YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE ANY NOTICE. IT'S THE WHITE HAIR... IT MAKES ME LOOK MORE DISTRAUGHT THAN I AM.
SO...YOU... AND MATT...?
3

ME AND MATT ARE FINE.

HE'S REALLY *PICKED UP*, Y'KNOW? HE DOESN'T JUST SIT AROUND ANYMORE, AND THE *DRINKING'S* STOPPED...

HE'S OUT LOOKING FOR A *HOUSE* FOR US. DID I TELL YOU THAT?

A HOUSE? NO.

THE *MONEY*. IS YOUR JOB.

AT *ELYSIUM LAWNS*? OH, THAT'S TREMENDOUS, JUST THE WAY IT'S *WORKING OUT* AND EVERYTHING..

AFTER THAT INCIDENT WITH THE *DEMON* CREATURE, I THOUGHT IT WOULD ALL BE... WELL, I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* I THOUGHT.

BUT IT WAS *AMAZING*... THEY JUST EXPLAINED EVERYTHING *AWAY* AS "*MASS-HYSTERIA*," STUFF LIKE THAT...

.. SO THE HOME'S JUST CARRYING ON AS NORMAL, WHATEVER "*NORMAL*" IS...

OH, SAY, I WAS MEANING TO ASK YOU...

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW LONG IT'S TAKING FOR THE FLIES TO DIE OFF THIS YEAR?

OUR MOTEL IS *FULL* OF 'EM. I WONDERED IF IT WAS, I DUNNO, SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE *GLASSHOUSE EFFECT*, OR...

UH... ALEC?

ALEC?
WHAT, D'D YOU SEE SOMETHING, OR.?
DON'T... CALLING ME... ALEC!
I...
I'M SORRY, I...
I M.. NOT ALEC HOLLAND...
ALEC HOLLAND. IS. EVIL..
PLUT
5

...BUT NOT BURIED.
PLUT
HOW DEEP..?
HOW DEEP..DO YOU NEED..TO BURY... THE PAST...
WHERE ARE YOU?
...BEFORE...IT WILL STAY...DEAD?
WHERE?
WHAT ARE YOU?
6

YOU'RE.. NOT... HOLLAND!
I'M... NOT HOLLAND!
HOLLAND DIED..
...D'IED..IN AN... EXPLOSION!
I HAVE...HIS CONSCIOUSNESS ...HIS MEMORIES...
...BUT HE... HE IS... DEAD..
I WILL... NOT..
...BE HAUNTED..
...BY MYSELF.

WAIT...

WAIT.. DON'T GO..

COME BACK.

PLEASE...

PLEASE COME BACK...

BUT HE DIDN'T.. COME BACK...

PLUT

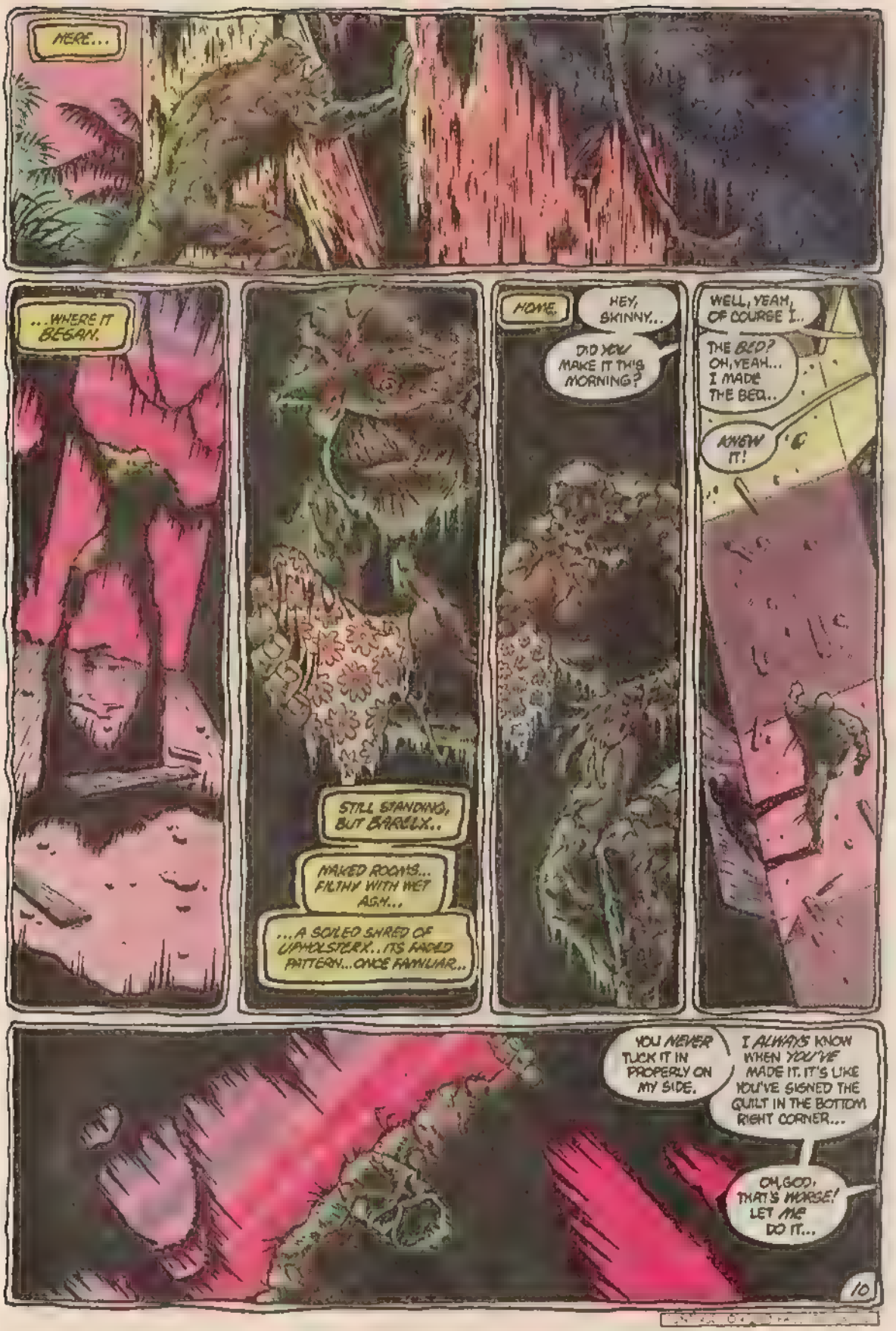
AND SO I... HAD TO FOLLOW... HIM...

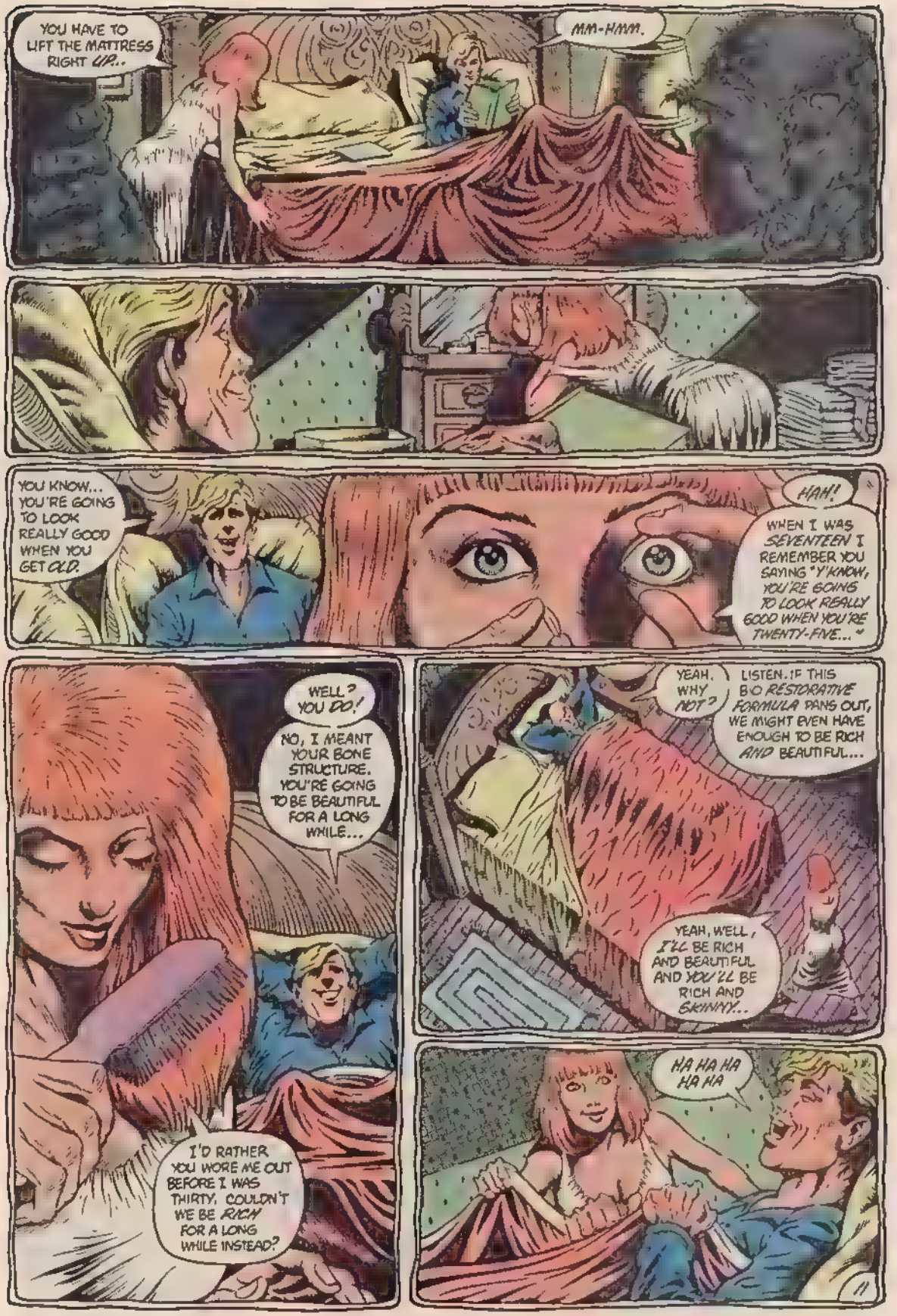
FOLLOW HIM... THROUGH THE LUMINOUS DUSK...

FOLLOW HIM... ALONG THE BRITTLE PATHS... OF AUTUMN...

THROUGH POOLS OF COLD WATER...

...FOLLOW HIM HERE.


HERE...
...WHERE IT BEGAN.
STILL STANDING, BUT BARELY...
NAKED ROOMS... FILTHY WITH WET ASH...
...A SOILED SHRED OF UPHOLSTERY... ITS FADED PATTERN... ONCE FAMILIAR...
HOME.
HEY, SKINNY...
DID YOU MAKE IT THIS MORNING?
WELL, YEAH, OF COURSE I...
THE BED? OH, YEAH... I MADE THE BED...
KNEW IT!
YOU NEVER TUCK IT IN PROPERLY ON MY SIDE.
I ALWAYS KNOW WHEN YOU'VE MADE IT. IT'S LIKE YOU'VE SIGNED THE QUILT IN THE BOTTOM RIGHT CORNER...
OH, GOD, THAT'S WORSE! LET ME DO IT...


YOU HAVE TO LIFT THE MATTRESS RIGHT UP...
MM-HMM.
YOU KNOW... YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK REALLY GOOD WHEN YOU GET OLD.
HAH!
WHEN I WAS SEVENTEEN I REMEMBER YOU SAYING "Y'KNOW, YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK REALLY GOOD WHEN YOU'RE TWENTY-FIVE..."
WELL? YOU DO!
NO, I MEANT YOUR BONE STRUCTURE. YOU'RE GOING TO BE BEAUTIFUL FOR A LONG WHILE...
I'D RATHER YOU WORE ME OUT BEFORE I WAS THIRTY. COULDN'T WE BE RICH FOR A LONG WHILE INSTEAD?
YEAH. WHY NOT?
LISTEN. IF THIS BIO RESTORATIVE FORMULA PANS OUT, WE MIGHT EVEN HAVE ENOUGH TO BE RICH AND BEAUTIFUL...
YEAH, WELL, I'LL BE RICH AND BEAUTIFUL AND YOU'LL BE RICH AND SKINNY...
HA HA HA HA HA

YOU COLD?

NO.

ARE YOU READING?

NO...

HOME.

...WHERE THE HEART IS...

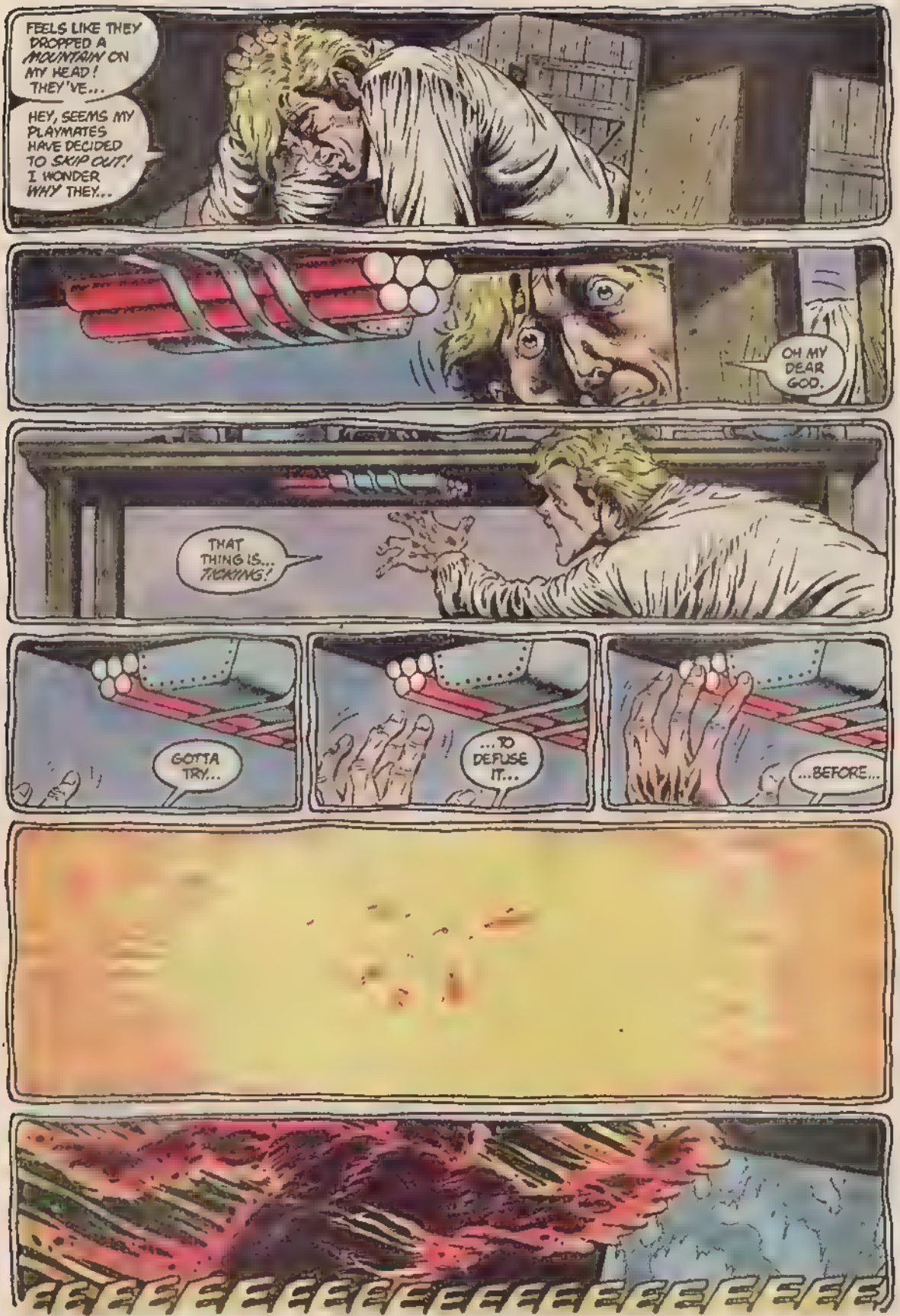
WHERE WE LIVED, ME...AND LINDA...

...WHERE WE DIED.

BUT, DR. HOLLAND... WE CAME TO YOU IN GOOD FAITH!

SAVE IT FOR THE BOYS IN BLUE, FERRETT.
MY WIFE AND I'LL SLEEP A LOT BETTER... KNOWING YOU THREE ARE BEHIND BARS!
SORRY WE CAN'T ACCOMMO-DATE YOU, DOC!
BRUNO.
...TAKE HIM.
NO!
HE WILL NOT BOTHER US, FERRETT.
SWELL! THEN WE CAN PLANT OUR LITTLE "SURPRISE PACKAGE" AN' GET THE HECK AWAY FROM THIS DUMP!
NO! STOP...
AGREED! I WANT TO BE MILES FROM HERE WHEN OUR GRACIOUS GIFT BLOWS!
HOWLAND. WAKE UP..
YOU MUST.. WAKE UP..
WAKE UP AND...IT WILL ALL TURN OUT.. DIFFERENTLY
HOWLAND.. PLEASE..
UNNHH...
13

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING


FEELS LIKE THEY DROPPED A MOUNTAIN ON MY HEAD! THEY'VE...
HEY, SEEMS MY PLAYMATES HAVE DECIDED TO SKIP OUT! I WONDER WHY THEY...
OH MY DEAR GOD.
THAT THING IS... TICKING!
GOTTA TRY...
...TO DEFUSE IT...
...BEFORE...

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
THERE...
IT IS DONE.
PLUT
15

ALL DONE.

BUT WHERE...

...IS THE BODY?

FOR HOURS I SAT...

...AND WATCHED...

...AND WAITED...

NOTHING.

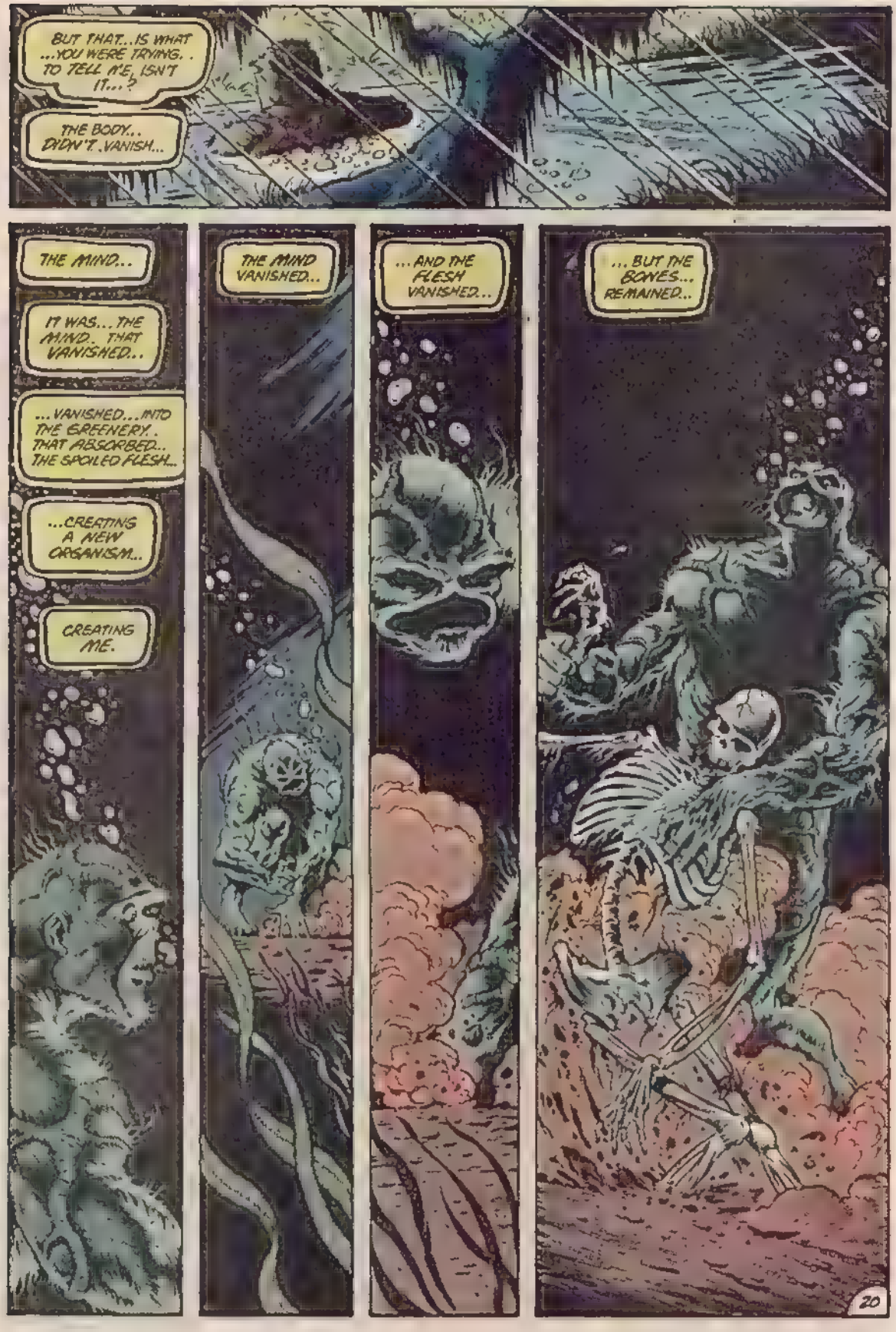
ALMOST NOTHING.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

ALMOST...
ALMOST NOTHING.

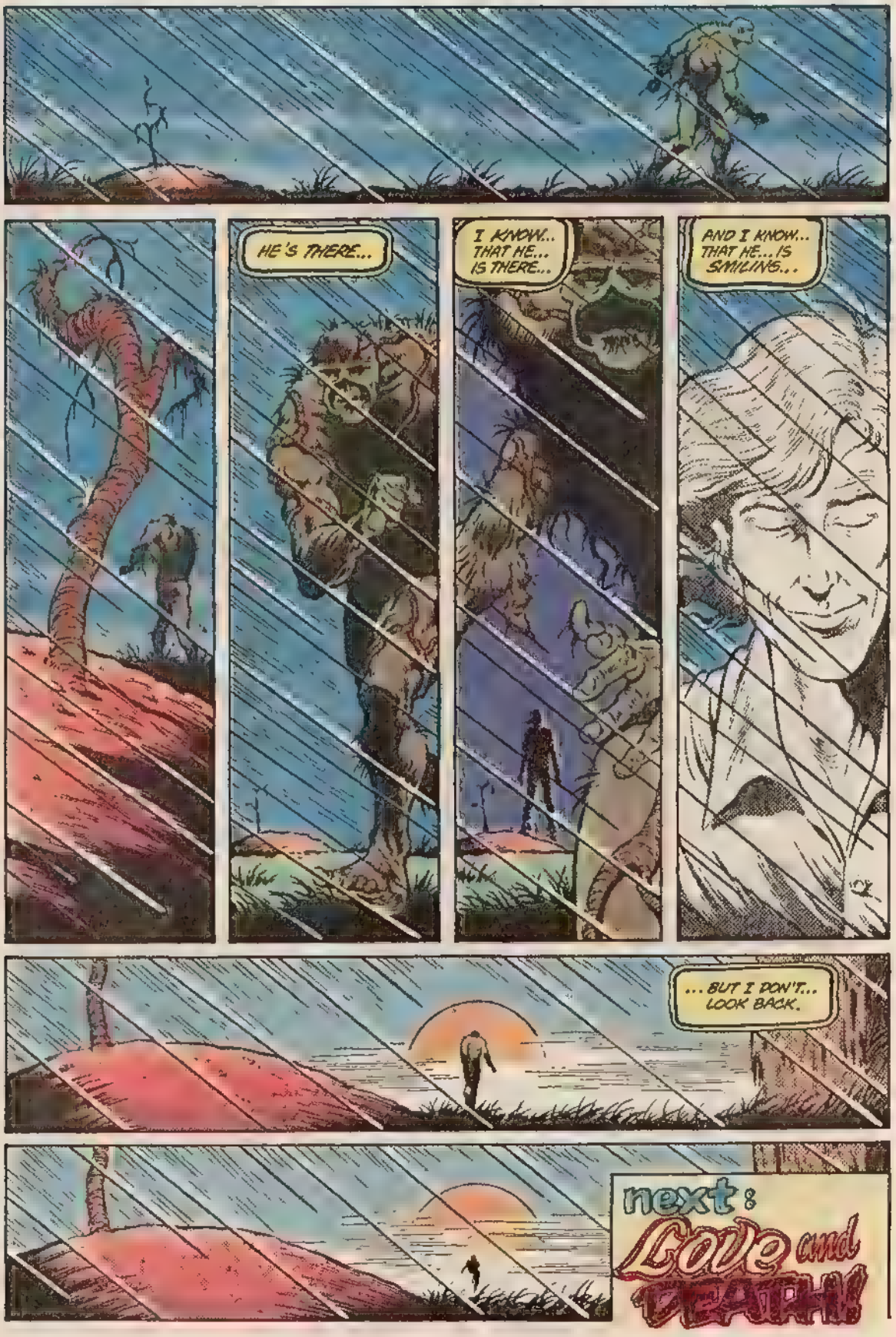
YOU...CAN SEE ME...?
NEAR ME...!
BUT... I HAVE SO MUCH ..TO TELL YOU..
YOUR FUTURE..
THINGS... THAT YOU... MUST KNOW..
THE MUD..?
SOMETHING... UNDER... THE MUD?

NOTHING.
AN EMPTY SPACE... MAKES EMPTY GESTURES...
...AND I HAVE DUG... AN EMPTY GRAVE...
...TO FIT... A VANISHED BODY.

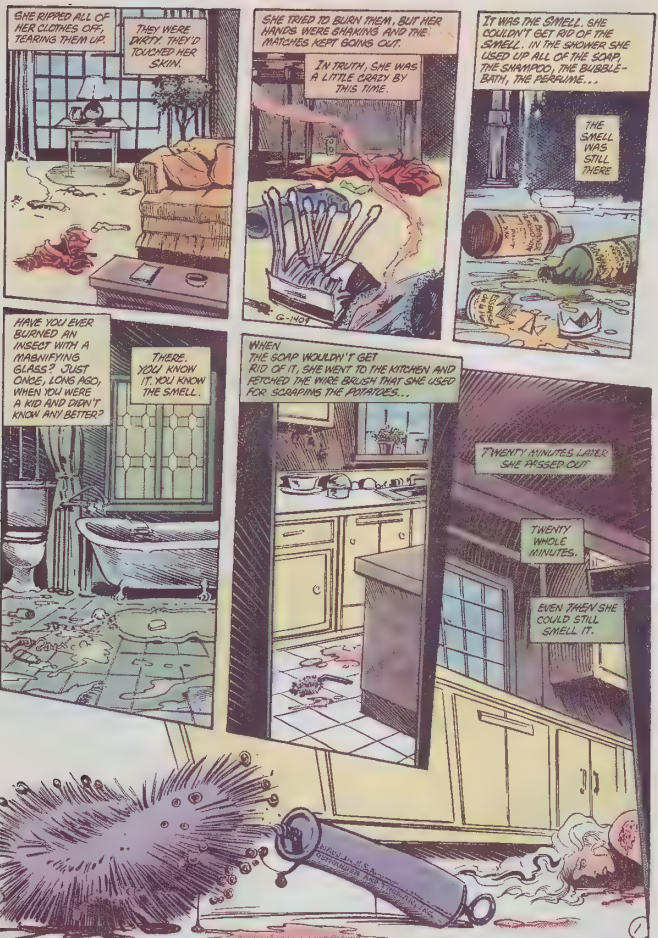

BUT THAT...IS WHAT ...YOU WERE TRYING.. TO TELL ME, ISN'T IT...?
THE BODY.. DIDN'T..VANISH...
THE MIND..
IT WAS...THE MIND.. THAT VANISHED..
...VANISHED...INTO THE GREENERY.. THAT ABSORBED... THE SPOILED FLESH...
...CREATING A NEW ORGANISM...
CREATING ME.
THE MIND VANISHED...
...AND THE FLESH VANISHED...
...BUT THE BONES... REMAINED...
20

...DOWN HERE... IN THE COLD...
...ALL THOSE... DARK YEARS...
YOU MUST...
...HAVE BEEN...
...LONELY...
COME...
I HAVE... PREPARED...A PLACE FOR YOU...
LET US HOPE...
...THAT IT IS... DEEP ENOUGH...
21

PAGE FOLLOWING


HE'S THERE...
I KNOW... THAT HE... IS THERE...
AND I KNOW... THAT HE... IS SMILING...
...BUT I DON'T... LOOK BACK.
next: Love and DEATH!

The SAGA of The
SWAMP THING
29
75¢
CAN. 95¢
U.K. 30p
OCT. 84
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.
BY
ALAN MOORE,
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN


SHE RIPPED ALL OF HER CLOTHES OFF, TEARING THEM UP.
THEY WERE DIRTY. THEY'D TOUCHED HER SKIN.
SHE TRIED TO BURN THEM, BUT HER HANDS WERE SHAKING AND THE MATCHES KEPT GOING OUT.
IN TRUTH, SHE WAS A LITTLE CRAZY BY THIS TIME.
G-I-NOT
IT WAS THE SMELL. SHE COULDN'T GET RID OF THE SMELL. IN THE SHOWER SHE USED UP ALL OF THE SOAP, THE SHAMPOO, THE BUBBLE-BATH, THE PERFUME...
THE SMELL WAS STILL THERE
HAVE YOU EVER BURNED AN INSECT WITH A MAGNIFYING GLASS? JUST ONCE, LONG AGO, WHEN YOU WERE A KID AND DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER?
THERE. YOU KNOW IT. YOU KNOW THE SMELL.
WHEN THE SOAP WOULDN'T GET RID OF IT, SHE WENT TO THE KITCHEN AND FETCHED THE WIRE BRUSH THAT SHE USED FOR SCRAPING THE POTATOES...
TWENTY MINUTES LATER SHE PASSED OUT
TWENTY WHOLE MINUTES.
EVEN THEN SHE COULD STILL SMELL IT.

THE SAGA OF SWAMP THING 29 Published monthly by DC Comics Inc 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103 POSTMASTER Send address changes to DC Comics Inc., Subscription Dept., PO Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, NJ 07024 Annual subscription rate $9.00. Outside USA $10.00. Copyright © 1984 DC Comics Inc All Rights Reserved The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. Printed in USA. Advertising Representative: Sanford Schwarz & Co., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017. (212) 391-1400.
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SHE COULD SMELL IT IN HER DREAMS.

SWAMP THING

CREATED BY LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON

LOVE AND DEATH

ALAN MOORE
WRITER

STEPHEN BISSETTE and JOHN TOTLEBEN
ARTISTS

KAREN BERGER
EDITOR

TATJANA WOOD
COLORIST

JOHN COSTANZA
LETTERER

THE DREAM HAD STARTED OUT SO NICELY...

SHE WAS OUT IN THE SWAMP AND HE WAS THERE AND THE WORLD FRIENDLY AGAIN.

HELLO.

HELLO...ABBY.

IT...HAS BEEN... A LONG TIME.

I MISSED YOU.

I THOUGHT...

WELL, YOU KNOW, AFTER THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU...

I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T LIKE ME ANYMORE.

I'M SORRY... I KNOW I MADE YOU MAD, I KEPT CALLING YOU ALEC, AND I KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT ALEC, BUT...

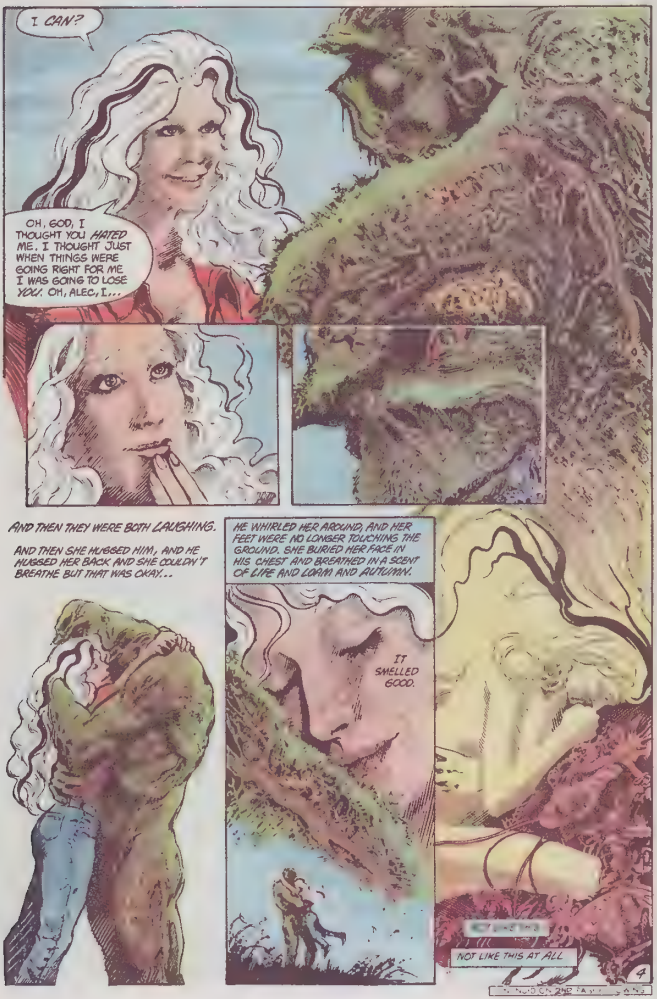
I CAN'T GET USED TO CALLING YOU ANYTHING ELSE. I'M SORRY, I'M AN IDIOT, I KNOW, BUT...

ABBY...

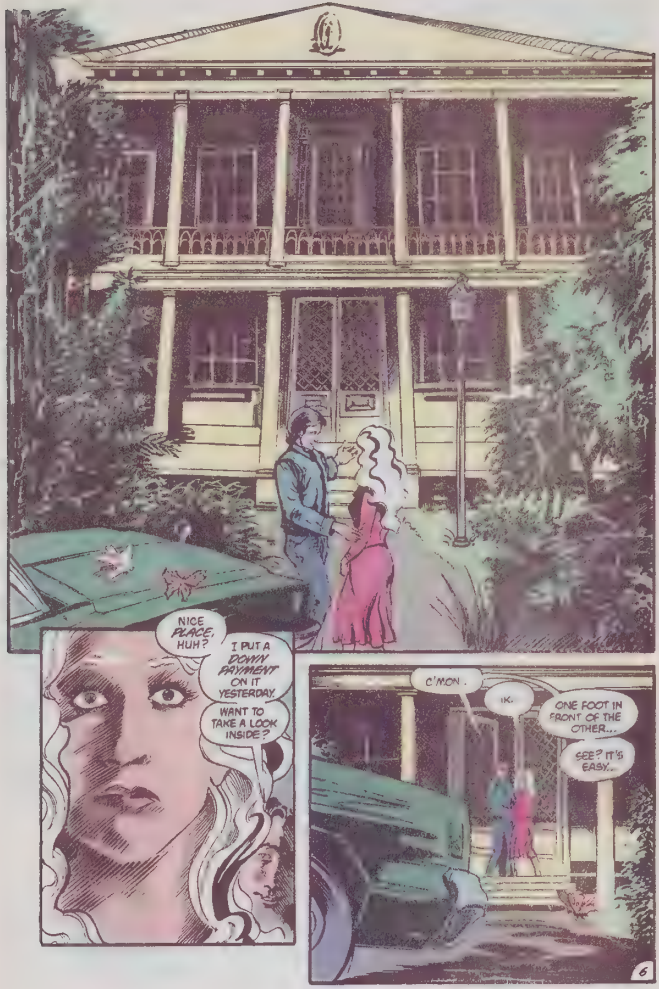
IT DOESN'T MATTER.

NOT ANY MORE.

YOU CAN CALL ME ALEC...IF IT'S EASIER...


I CAN?
OH, GOD, I THOUGHT YOU HATED ME. I THOUGHT JUST WHEN THINGS WERE GOING RIGHT FOR ME I WAS GOING TO LOSE YOU. OH, ALEC, I...
AND THEN THEY WERE BOTH LAUGHING.
AND THEN SHE HUGGED HIM, AND HE HUGGED HER BACK AND SHE COULDN'T BREATHE BUT THAT WAS OKAY...
HE WHIRLED HER AROUND, AND HER FEET WERE NO LONGER TOUCHING THE GROUND. SHE BURIED HER FACE IN HIS CHEST AND BREATHED IN A SCENT OF LIFE AND LOAM AND AUTUMN.
IT SMELLED GOOD.
NOT LIKE THIS AT ALL

THE DREAM TWISTED THEN, FOLDING IN UPON ITSELF AND BLOSSOMING INTO NEW SHAPES.
THE LIGHT CHANGED, AS IF A CLOUD OF BLOWFLIES HAD SUDDENLY OBSCURED THE SUN.
...AND SHE WAS WITH HER HUSBAND, AND HE SAID HE HAD THREE SURPRISES FOR HER.
OH, MATT, COME ON! WHAT?
GUESS.
YOU'VE DISCOVERED YOU'RE HEIR TO THE THRONE OF DUBROVNIA?
NOPE.
YOU'VE JOINED THE MORMONS.
UH-UH.
YOU'RE REALLY ALAN ALDA AND FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS I'VE BEEN ON CANDID CAMERA.
CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR.
I WANT A DIVORCE.
FAIR ENOUGH BUT YOU'LL BE SO-REE
MATT, IF YOU DON'T TELL ME WHAT THIS SURPRISE IS, YOU'LL BE CHAIRBOUND!
OH, OKAY. IF YOU'RE GOING TO GET VIOLENT...
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE SURPRISE IS?
WELL, WE'RE RIGHT NOW PARKED OUTSIDE OF IT.
WE'RE...?
5


NICE PLACE, HUH?
I PUT A DOWN PAYMENT ON IT YESTERDAY.
WANT TO TAKE A LOOK INSIDE?
C'MON.
IK.
ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER...
SEE? IT'S EASY...

AND SO THEY'D GONE INSIDE.
INSIDE, IT LOOKED EVEN BETTER.
MATT... ALL THIS FURNITURE! THESE CARPETS..
THEY CAME WITH THE HOUSE. THE PEOPLE WHO OWNED THIS PLACE DIDN'T WANT THE TROUBLE AND EXPENSE OF MOVING THEM, I GUESS
COME ON. LET'S LOOK AROUND
THE LIVING ROOM
THE KITCHEN...
THE DREAM WAVERED HERE. HERE WAS WHERE THE BAD THING WAS HIDDEN... A SUDDEN SCENT OF SMOLDERING INSECT FLESH, ACRID AND BITTER BEHIND THE NOSTRILS.
BEDROOM...
...AND THEN IT WAS GONE
MATT? HOW DID YOU FIND THIS PLACE? WE CAN'T AFFORD ANYTHING LIKE THIS!
WE ONLY HAVE MY JOB AT ELYSIUM LAWNS..
THAT'S MY SECOND SURPRISE.
COME ON.. BACK TO THE CAR.

TENTATIVE FEELERS BRUSHED AGAINST THE SKIN OF HER DELIRIUM. THERE WAS THE BEATING OF MINIATURE WINGS. THERE WERE ARMS WITH TWO ELBOWS...

HERE...

WELL? WE'RE HERE. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?

WHAT DO I THINK OF WHAT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PLACE WHERE I WORK?

BLACKRIVER RECORPORATIONS

WHERE YOU WORK?

YOU HAVE A JOB?

MATTHEW! MATTHEW, M'BOY!

ERIC!

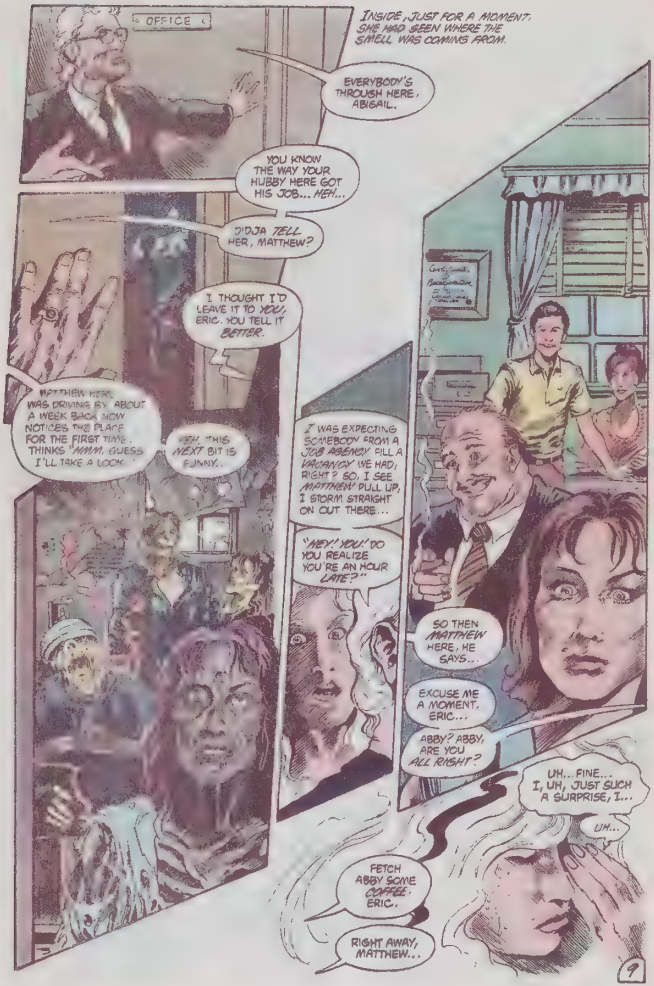
ABBY, THIS IS ERIC LOVEDAY. ERIC'S MY BOSS.

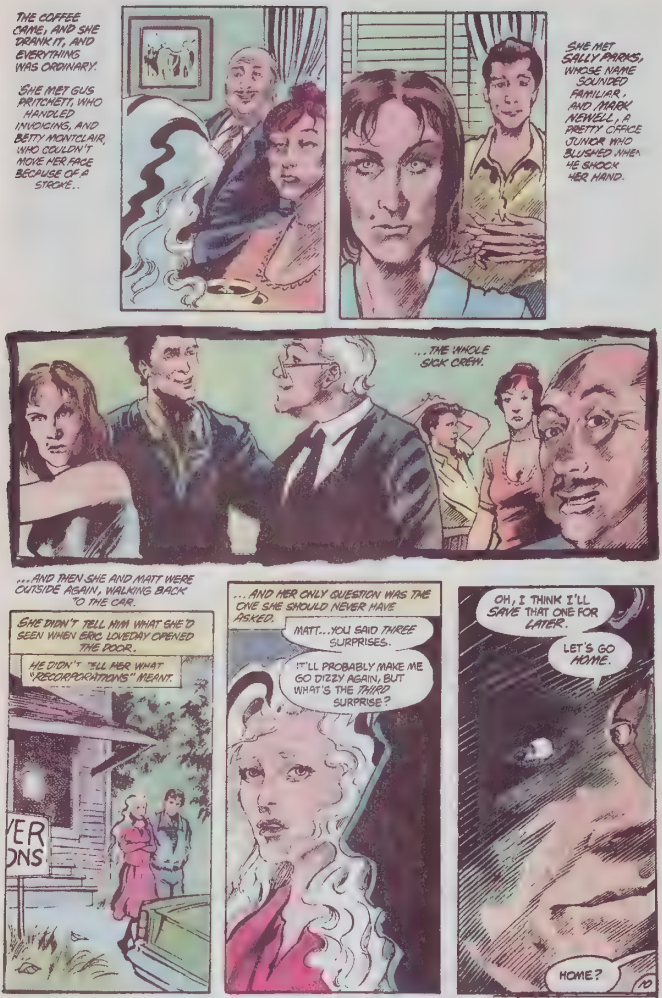
ERIC, THIS IS MY WIFE, ABIGAIL.

A LOVELY NAME FOR A LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN.

COME ON INSIDE, ABBY, AND MEET THE WHOLE SICK CREW...

NO. NOT INSIDE. DON'T GO INSIDE. THE SMELL WAS WORSE INSIDE...


INSIDE, JUST FOR A MOMENT, SHE HAD SEEN WHERE THE SMELL WAS COMING FROM.
OFFICE
EVERYBODY'S THROUGH HERE, ABIGAIL.
YOU KNOW THE WAY YOUR HUBBY HERE GOT HIS JOB... HEH...
DIDJA TELL HER, MATTHEW?
I THOUGHT I'D LEAVE IT TO YOU, ERIC. YOU TELL IT BETTER.
MATTHEW HERE WAS DRIVING BY ABOUT A WEEK BACK NOW NOTICES THE PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME. THINKS "MMM, GUESS I'LL TAKE A LOOK."
HEH. THIS NEXT BIT IS FUNNY..
I WAS EXPECTING SOMEBODY FROM A JOB AGENCY FILL A VACANCY WE HAD, RIGHT? SO, I SEE MATTHEW PULL UP, I STORM STRAIGHT ON OUT THERE...
"HEY! YOU! DO YOU REALIZE YOU'RE AN HOUR LATE?"
SO THEN MATTHEW HERE, HE SAYS...
EXCUSE ME A MOMENT, ERIC...
ABBY? ABBY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
UH... FINE... I, UH, JUST SUCH A SURPRISE, I...
UM...
FETCH ABBY SOME COFFEE, ERIC.
RIGHT AWAY, MATTHEW...
9


THE COFFEE CAME, AND SHE DRANK IT, AND EVERYTHING WAS ORDINARY.
SHE MET GUS PRITCHETT, WHO HANDLED INVOICINGS, AND BETTY MONTCLAIR, WHO COULDN'T MOVE HER FACE BECAUSE OF A STROKE..
SHE MET SALLY PARKS, WHOSE NAME SOUNDED FAMILIAR, AND MARK NEWELL, A PRETTY CIRCLE JUNKIE WHO BLUSHED WHEN HE SHOOK HER HAND.
...THE WHOLE SICK CREW.
...AND THEN SHE AND MATT WERE OUTSIDE AGAIN, WALKING BACK TO THE CAR.
SHE DIDN'T TELL HIM WHAT SHE'D SEEN WHEN ERIC LOVEDAY OPENED THE DOOR.
HE DIDN'T TELL HER WHAT "RECORPORATIONS" MEANT.
...AND HER ONLY QUESTION WAS THE ONE SHE SHOULD NEVER HAVE ASKED.
MATT...YOU SAID THREE SURPRISES.
IT'LL PROBABLY MAKE ME GO DIZZY AGAIN, BUT WHAT'S THE THIRD SURPRISE?
OH, I THINK I'LL SAVE THAT ONE FOR LATER.
LET'S GO HOME.
HOME?
10
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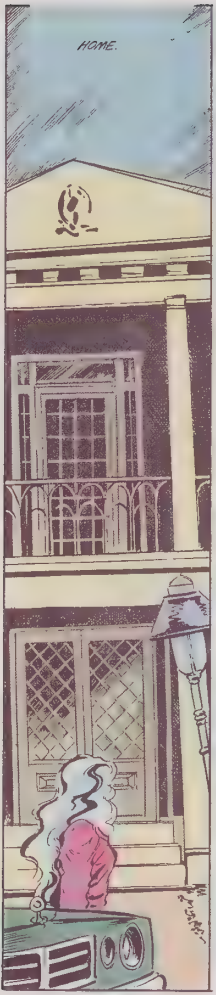
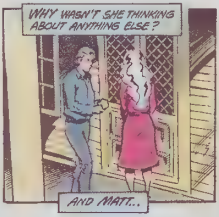
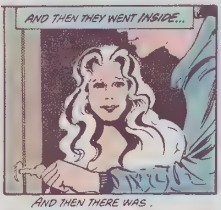


IT WAS HER HOME AND SHE AND MATT OWNED IT AND IT WAS BEAUTIFUL. SHE WASN'T THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.



MATT HAD CHANGED SO MUCH. ALL THE WEAKNESS AND DESPAIR HAD GONE, LEAVING A NEW STRENGTH, AN UNFAMILIAR CONFIDENCE...

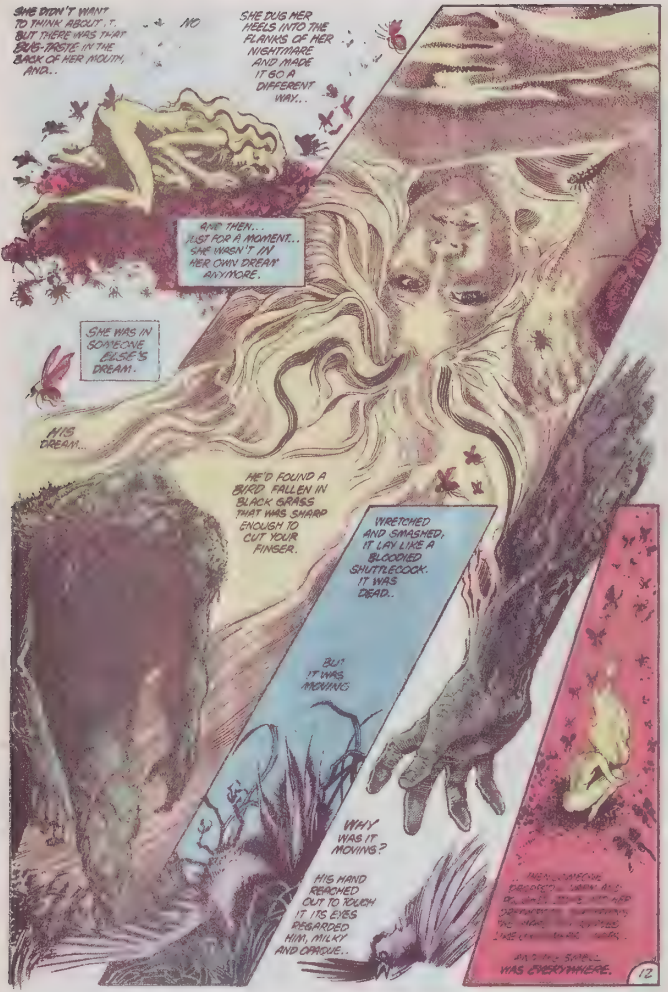


AND THEN THERE WAS.

AND THEN THERE WAS THE...

...THE BAD THING.

YES.


SHE DIDN'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT. BUT THERE WAS THAT BUG-TASTE IN THE BACK OF HER MOUTH, AND..
NO
SHE DUG HER HEELS INTO THE FLANKS OF HER NIGHTMARE AND MADE IT GO A DIFFERENT WAY..
AND THEN... JUST FOR A MOMENT... SHE WASN'T IN HER OWN DREAM ANYMORE.
SHE WAS IN SOMEONE ELSE'S DREAM.
HIS DREAM...
HE'D FOUND A BIRD FALLEN IN BLACK GRASS THAT WAS SHARP ENOUGH TO CUT YOUR FINGER.
WRETCHED AND SMASHED, IT LAY LIKE A BLOODIED SHUTTLECOCK. IT WAS DEAD..
BUT IT WAS MOVING.
WHY WAS IT MOVING?
HIS HAND REACHED OUT TO TOUCH IT. ITS EYES REGARDED HIM, MILKY AND OPAQUE..
WAS EVERYWHERE.
12

EVEN WHEN SHE'D GONE OVER TO THE LIBRARY IN HOUMA, WHERE NOTHING STRANGE EVER HAPPENED AND REALITY WAS ALPHABETICALLY FILED...
EVEN THERE.
TERREBONNE PARISH PUBLIC LIBRARY
NO PARKING ANY TIME
EXCUSE ME?
IS THERE A SECTION WHERE YOU KEEP YOUR PSYCHOLOGY BOOKS?
PSYCHOLOGY OR PSYCHIATRY?
UH... WELL, I DON'T KNOW... I'M WORKING WITH AUTISTIC KIDS AND I WAS LOOKING FOR...
PSYCHOLOGY, OVER IN THE FAR CORNER.
RIGHT. THANKS.
THE SIEGE
THUK
OH SSHHHH!
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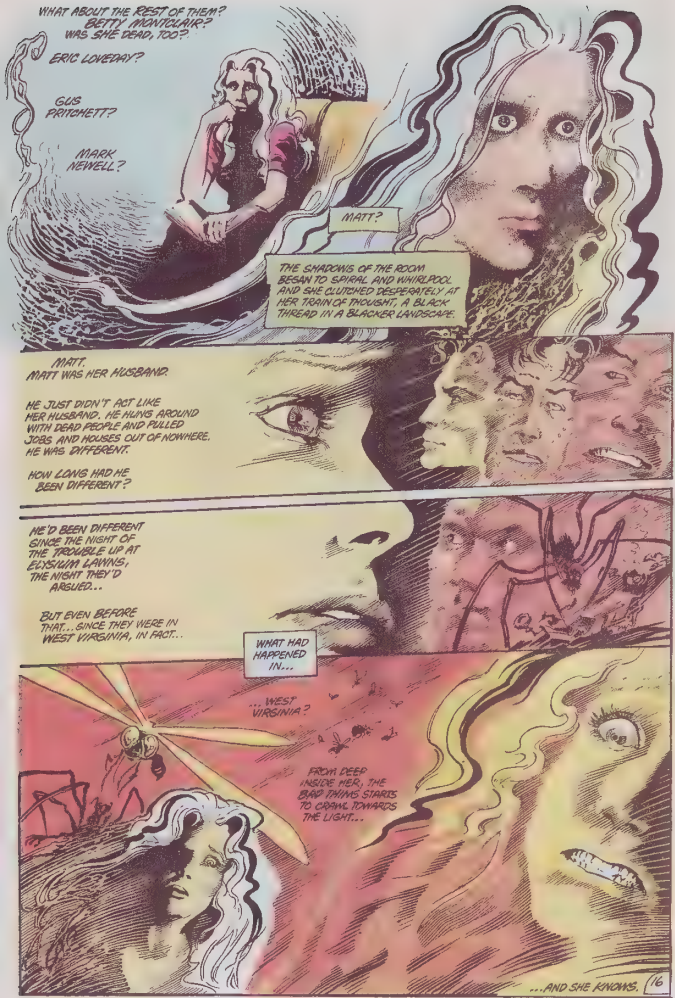
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

DEADLIER
BY
SALLY PARIS
BY
DR.
NILES
RICHY
Introduction
BY J. P.
SEARLES
ILLUSTRATED
WITH PHOTOS
SALLY PARIS
TTT!

SHE'D DRIVEN HOME (HOME?) WITH THE BOOK ON THE SEAT BESIDE HER, FACE-DOWN.
WHEN SHE GOT BACK TO THE HOUSE, SHE READ IT, SKIMMING FRANTICALLY
SALLY PARKS, WHO, IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS OF HER TWENTY-SIX BRIEF YEARS, HAD DONE MANY INTERESTING AND NOTABLE THINGS.
SHE HAD KILLED FIFTEEN PEOPLE..
(EMPLOYER, EMPLOYER'S WIFE AND TEENAGE DAUGHTER, HER OWN BOYFRIEND, HER BOYFRIEND'S MOTHER, TWO POLICE OFFICERS, ONE NEWSBOY..)
..WITH A VARIETY OF WEAPONS... GUN, LETTER OPENER, TIRE IRON, WIRE COAT HANGER...
FOR NO REASON AT ALL..
..BEFORE BEING SHOT DEAD BY POLICE ON THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 7TH, 1962
THAT SALLY PARKS.
..WHO, TWENTY-TWO YEARS LATER, HAD A NICE LITTLE JOB TYPING MEMOS FOR BLACKRIVER RECORPORATIONS, INC.
WHY HADN'T SHE ASKED?
WHY HADN'T SHE ASKED WHAT "RECORPORATIONS" MEANT?


WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF THEM? BETTY MONTOLAIR? WAS SHE DEAD, TOO?
ERIC LOVEDAY?
GUS PRITCHETT?
MARK NEWELL?
MATT?
THE SHADOWS OF THE ROOM BEGAN TO SPIRAL AND WHIRLPOOL AND SHE CLUTCHED DESPERATELY AT HER TRAIN OF THOUGHT, A BLACK THREAD IN A BLACKER LANDSCAPE.
MATT. MATT WAS HER HUSBAND.
HE JUST DIDN'T ACT LIKE HER HUSBAND. HE HUNG AROUND WITH DEAD PEOPLE AND PULLED JOBS AND HOUSES OUT OF NOWHERE. HE WAS DIFFERENT.
HOW LONG HAD HE BEEN DIFFERENT?
HE'D BEEN DIFFERENT SINCE THE NIGHT OF THE TROUBLE UP AT ECOSSIAN LAWNS, THE NIGHT THEY'D ARGUED..
BUT EVEN BEFORE THAT...SINCE THEY WERE IN WEST VIRGINIA, IN FACT...
WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN...
...WEST VIRGINIA?
FROM DEEP INSIDE HER, THE BAD THING STARTS TO CRAWL TOWARDS THE LIGHT...
...AND SHE KNOWS.
16
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

SHE KNOWS WHAT ABCORPORATIONS ARE.
SHE KNOWS WHICH BLACK RIVER, HEADING WHERE..
BLACKRIVER ABCORPORATIONS
AND WHY THE DEAD BIRD MOVES.
HIS NAME SLAMS INTO HER MIND, AND HER KNEES BUCKLE BEFORE ITS AWFUL FORCE.
HIS NAME, A SIGNATURE SCRAWLED IN ACID..
AND SHE THINKS "HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN MARRIED TO...?"
AND SHE THINKS "HOW MANY TIMES DID..?"
AND SHE KNOWS WHAT THE DEAD BIRD IS, AND WHERE THE STENCH IS COMING FROM.

IT'S HER...
...AND SHE CANNOT TEAR THE CONTAMINATION AWAY FROM HER...
...OR BURN IT...
...OR SMOTHER IT WITH PERFUME...
...OR SCRAPE IT FROM HER SKIN...
AND HER DREAMS ARE REEKING, UNBEARABLE THINGS...

...AND HER WAKING IS NO RELIEF.

OH GOD...

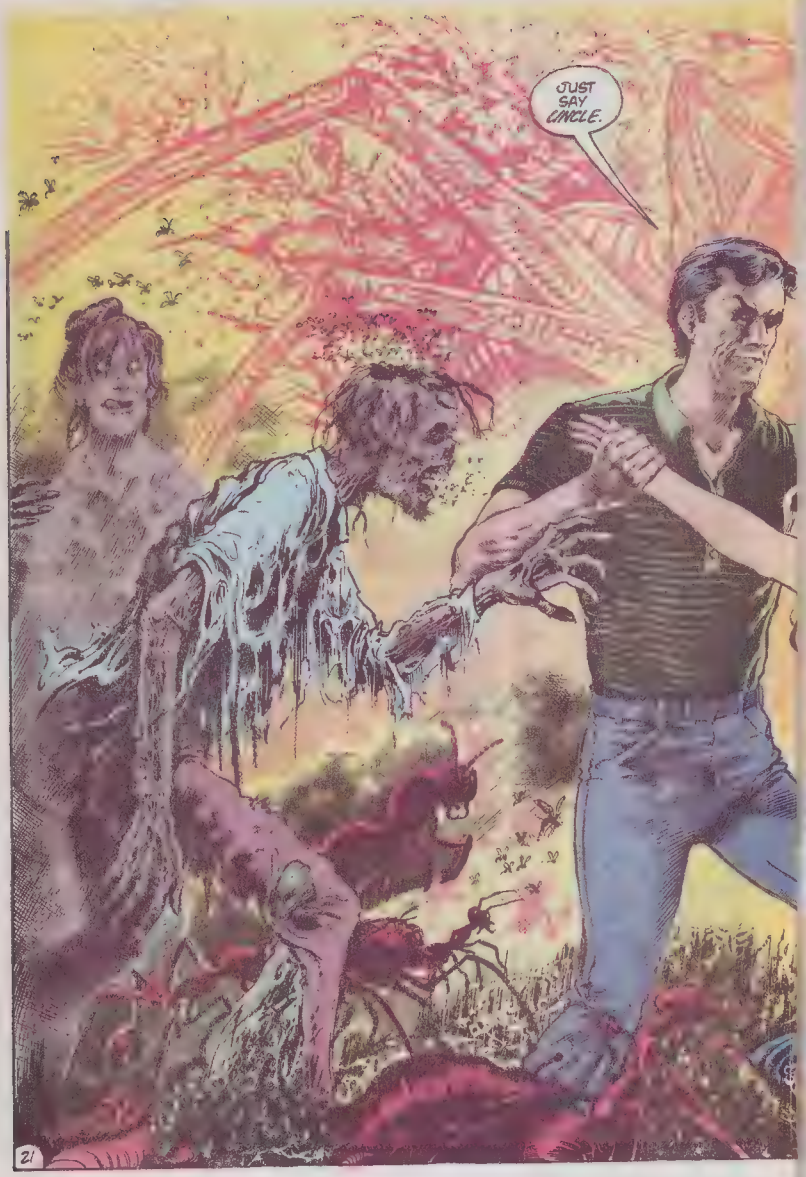
CLOTHES...
WHERE DID I PUT... UUEUUGH...
...FIND MY CLOTHES...

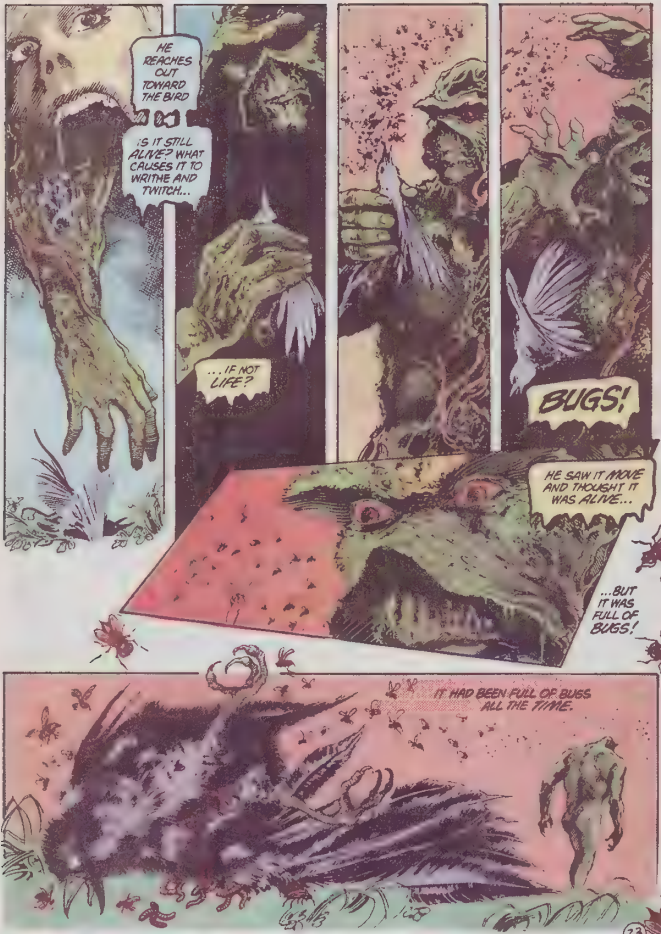
GET OUT...
GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT.
GET OUT QUICK...

GET OUT QUICK BEFORE...

19

HELLO, HON.
HOPE YOU DON'T MIND..
... BUT I BROUGHT SOME FRIENDS HOME.
OH... UHHHH...
NO! NO, COME IN!
I, UH, I, UH, OUGHTA GO TO THE STORE... GET SOMETHING FOR DINNER...
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, ABIGAIL.
WE'LL TAKE YOU AS WE FIND YOU.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOUR WIFE LOOKS NERVOUS, MATTY...
HMM. YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.
WHAT IS IT, AB? WHAT'S THE MATTER, SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?
I...I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! I...
OH GOD...
LOOK, PLEASE, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?
HHUHH...
WHAT DO WE WANT YOU TO SAY?
WELL, THAT'S EASY..
OH NO. NO. NO NO.


JUST SAY CIRCLE.


HE REACHES OUT TOWARD THE BIRD
...IS IT STILL ALIVE? WHAT CAUSES IT TO WRITHE AND TWITCH...
...IF NOT LIFE?
BUGS!
HE SAW IT MOVE AND THOUGHT IT WAS ALIVE...
...BUT IT WAS FULL OF BUGS!
IT HAD BEEN FULL OF BUGS ALL THE TIME.

NEXT: "A HALO OF FLIES"

The SAGA of The
SWAMP THING
30
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U.K. 30p
NOV 84
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.
S.R. BISSETTE & TOTLEBEN

THE RETURNED MAN SMILES...
...AND OUTSIDE THE LOUISIANA SKY SOARS FROM RIM TO RIM, CURDLING THE NOVEMBER CLOUDS.
THE RETURNED MAN CHUCKLES...
...AND A SHOCKWAVE OF NIGHTMARE RIPPLES OUT ACROSS THE SLEEPING CONTINENT...
G-172
...AND IN LAFAYETTE, JODY HERBERT COMES ACROSS THE WINO PASSED OUT IN AN ALLEYWAY AND JODY HAS A BOOK OF MATCHES IN HIS POCKET AND THERE'S NOBODY ELSE AROUND...
...AND IN ALEXANDRIA, TINA-LOUISE PIERCE SAYS "THE HELL WITH IT" AND LIFTS THE ANCIENT IRON IRONS FAN THAT HER HUSBAND IS TOO CHEAP TO REPLACE...

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...AND IN SHREVEPORT, JIM AND CAROLE PATTERSON'S PET CAT SPOCK SEES THAT THEIR SON RICKIE'S CRIB IS A WARM PLACE TO SIT...
...AND IN LAKE CHARLES A GUIDE DOG SUDDENLY GROWS IRRITATED WITH ITS MISTRESS...
...AND ON A FARM THREE MILES WEST OF CROWLEY SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS BORN THAT CRIES LIKE A WOMAN AND THEN DIES...
...AND IN HOUMA, ABIGAIL CABLE JUST CAN'T STOP SCREAMING...
...AND THE RETURNED MAN LOOKS UPON HIS WORKS...
...AND HE SEES THAT THEY ARE GOOD.

A HALO OF FLIES

an
ALAN MOORE
WRITER
•
STEPHEN BISSETTE and ALFREDO ALCALA
ARTISTS
•
KAREN BERGER
EDITOR
•
TATJANA WOOD
COLORIST
•
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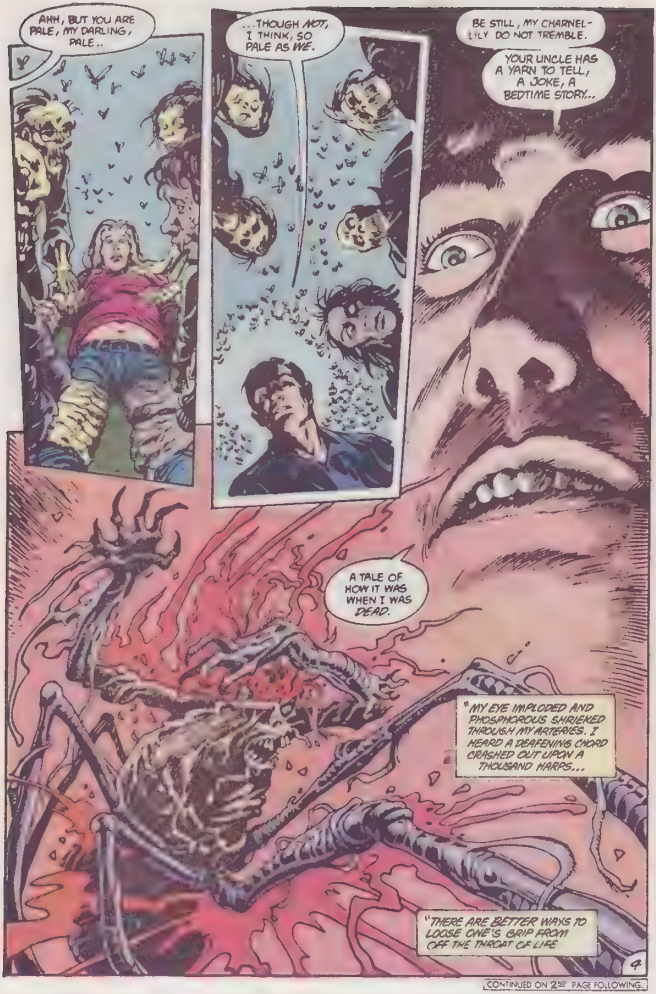
LETTERER
presentation


AHH, BUT YOU ARE PALE, MY DARLING, PALE..
...THOUGH NOT, I THINK, SO PALE AS ME.
BE STILL, MY CHARNEL-LILY DO NOT TREMBLE.
YOUR UNCLE HAS A YARN TO TELL, A JOKE, A BEDTIME STORY...
A TALE OF HOW IT WAS WHEN I WAS DEAD.
"MY EYE IMPLODED AND PHOSPHOROUS SHRIEKED THROUGH MY ARTERIES. I HEARD A DEAFENING CHORD CRASHED OUT UPON A THOUSAND HARPS...
"THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO LOOSE ONE'S GRIP FROM OFF THE THROAT OF LIFE
4

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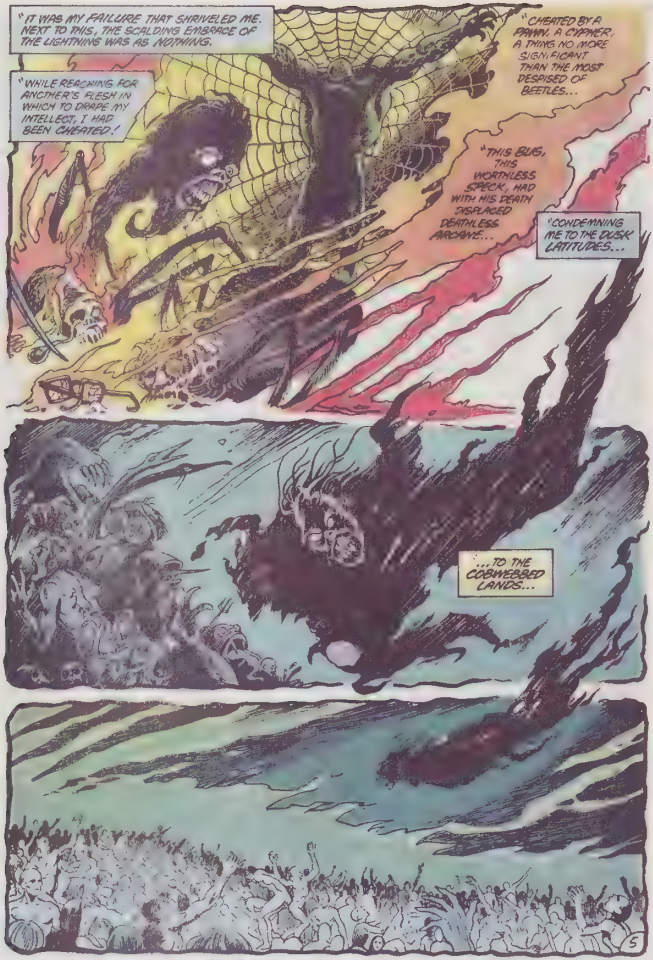

"IT WAS MY FAILURE THAT SHRIVELED ME. NEXT TO THIS, THE SCALDING EMBRACE OF THE LIGHTNING WAS AS NOTHING.
"WHILE REACHING FOR ANOTHER'S FLESH IN WHICH TO DRAPE MY INTELLECT, I HAD BEEN CHEATED."
"CHEATED BY A PAWN, A CYPHER, A THING NO MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THE MOST DESPISED OF BEETLES...
"THIS BUG, THIS WORTHLESS SPECK, HAD WITH HIS DEATH DISGRACED DEATHLESS ARIOSTE...
"CONDEMNING ME TO THE DUSKY LATITUDES...
...TO THE CADAVERED LANDS...
5

...TO THE DISMAL REGION OF THE BODYLESS MEN.

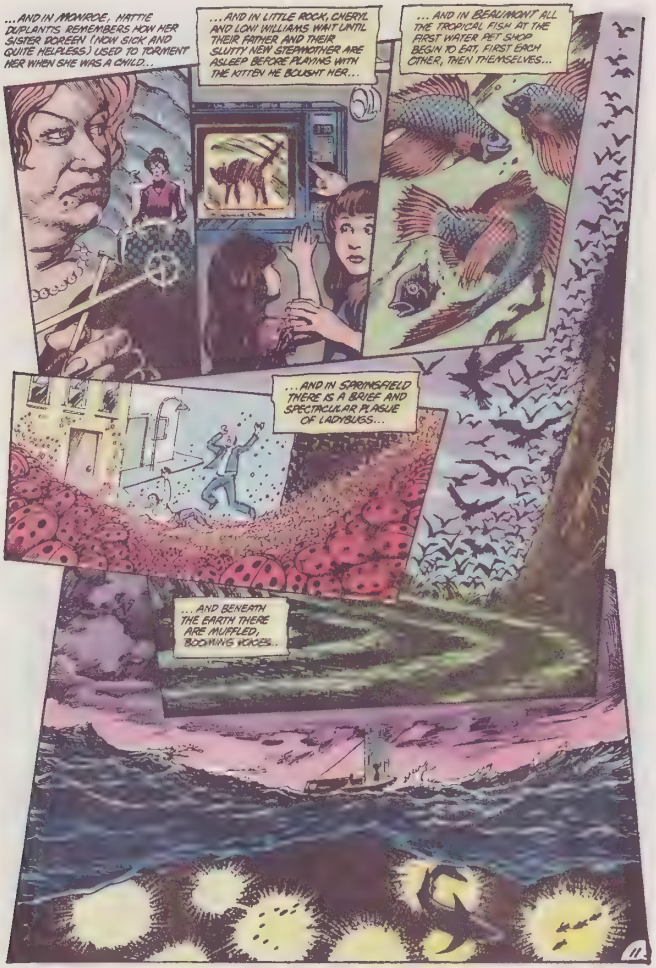
"THERE WERE SO MANY OF THEM, CRUSHT THERE IN THE FOSS OF AFTERLIFE, THEIR SOULS TOO DENSE AND ARCHBOUND TO CLIMB TOWARD THE LIGHT.
"POISONERS, TRAITORS, TYRANTS AND TORTURERS...
"THEIR EVIL WAS MASSIVE, IT HAD A GRAVITY, A COLD PSYCHIC UNDERTOW THAT DRAGGED AT MY AWARENESS...
"BUT I STRUGGLED FREE, FROM FINGERS WITHOUT BLOOD OR BONE OR SINEW...
"STRUGGLED FREE FROM THAT MALIGN AND TREACLE-BLACK TWILIGHT...
"...MAKING MY WAY BACK TO THE BLEACHED HEMISPHERES BEYOND...
"...BACK TO MY DISCARDED CLAY AS A SERPENT WILL RETURN TO FRESH SLOUGHED SKIN.
"IT LAY THERE IN THE DIRT.
"SO SMALL...
"SO DIMINISHED...
6

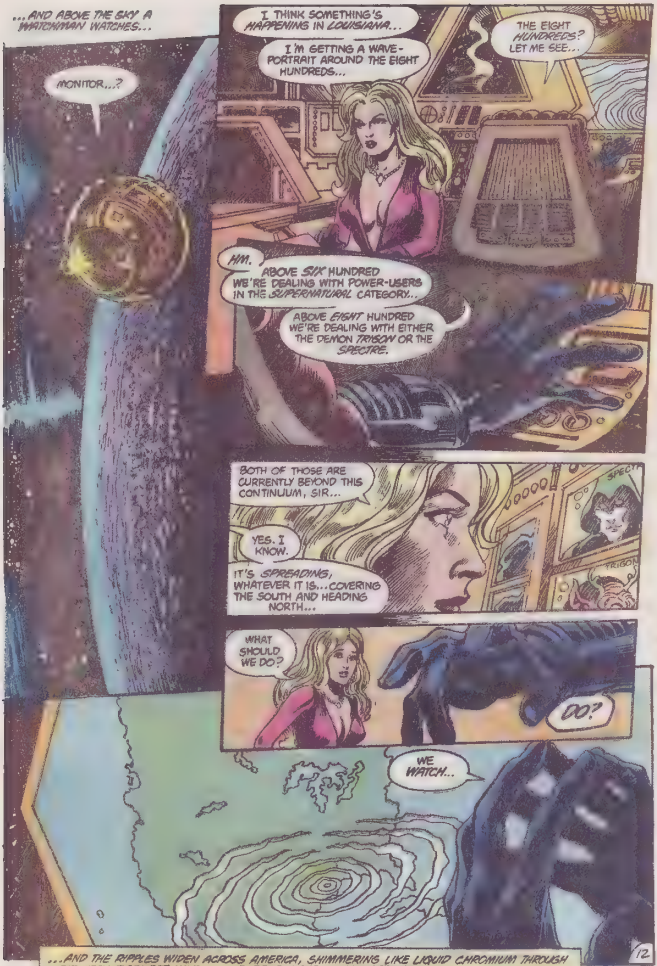
"IT WAS A THING OF STARING, IDIOT SOCKETS AND SCORCHED METAL, OF MELTED WIRES THAT TANGLED LIKE GANGLIA FROM THE PERISHED FLESH.
"I COULD NOT WEAR THIS TRAVESTY.
"BUT I WAS IN THE WORLD ONCE MORE, THE WORLD THAT STRETCHED ABOUT ME LIKE A VAST WARDROBE, FILLED WITH HALF-AWAKE CORPSES.
"I WOULD CLOTHE MY SPIRIT ELSEWHERE..."
...IN WHATEVER RAGS WERE AVAILABLE.
YOU...
...TOOK MATT'S BODY... MADE HIM INTO A MONSTER.
OH GOD, MATT...
DEAREST ABIGAIL, YOUR GRASP OF THE INHUMAN IS SO LIMITED AND SHALLOW.
YOU SPARE YOURSELF THE FULLEST HORROR.
LONG BEFORE HE LOANED HIS FLESH TO ME, MATTHEW JOSEPH CABLE WAS NO STRANGER TO MONSTROSITY...

"WITH HIM, IT WAS A MONSTROSITY OF LUST, OF ABERRATIONS NURTURED AND WEAKNESSES INDULGED.
"A FLUKE OF THE BRAIN HAD GIVEN YOUR HUSBAND ABILITIES TO SHAKE WHAT GODS THERE BE, THE POWER TO BEND THE WORLD AND MAKE DREAMS TOUCHABLE.
"HE SQUANDERED IT ON TRIVIAL AND SQUALID DIORAMAS."
TROUTSKINNED WOMEN WITH THE LUSTER OF NEON...
...WOMEN OF SMOKE...
...MANIKINS TEXTURED LIKE APRICOTS...
NO!! I'M NOT LISTENING!! NO NO NO NO...
YESSSS!!
CERTAINLY, MY PROXIMITY DID NOT HINDER HIS DISINTEGRATION...
...BUT MATTHEW CABLE BEAT HIS OWN PATH TO HELL.
"I MERELY WAITED...
"...AND WATCHED...

"LENDING ANY INFLUENCE TO AN OCCASIONAL DIVERSION..
"... A MOMENTARY DISTRACTION..
"... A CHOREOGRAPHED DISASTER.
"THE FINAL BLOW, WHEN STRUCK, CAME AS A STROKE OF SWEETEST MERCY.
"HE SURRENDERED HIS FLESH WILLINGLY..."
... AND WITHOUT REMORSE.
9

THUS, YOUR HUSBAND'S SHELL IS MINE TO WEAR...
...YOUR HUSBAND'S TALENTS MINE TO EMPLOY.
I AM ARCANE!
I AM RETURNED FROM THE DEAD
AND THERE IS NOTHING THAT I CANNOT DO.
AND THE DEPRAVED MAN SMILES...


...AND IN MONROE, HATTIE DUPLANTIS REMEMBERS HOW HER SISTER DOREEN (NOW SICK AND QUITE HELPLESS) USED TO TORMENT HER WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD...
...AND IN LITTLE ROCK, CHERYL AND LONI WILLIAMS WAIT UNTIL THEIR FATHER AND THEIR SLUTTY NEW STEPMOTHER ARE ASLEEP BEFORE PLAYING WITH THE KITTEN HE BOUGHT HER...
...AND IN BEAUMONT ALL THE TROPICAL FISH AT THE FIRST WATER PET SHOP BEGIN TO EAT, FIRST EACH OTHER, THEN THEMSELVES...
...AND IN SPRINGFIELD THERE IS A BRIEF AND SPECTACULAR PLAGUE OF LADYBUGS...
...AND BENEATH THE EARTH THERE ARE MUFFLED, BOOMING VOICES...
...AND BENEATH THE OCEAN THERE ARE TERRIBLE LIGHTS...


...AND ABOVE THE SKY A WATCHMAN WATCHES...
MONITOR...?
I THINK SOMETHING'S HAPPENING IN LOUISIANA...
I'M GETTING A WAVE-PORTRAIT AROUND THE EIGHT HUNDREDS...
THE EIGHT HUNDREDS? LET ME SEE...
HM.
ABOVE SIX HUNDRED WE'RE DEALING WITH POWER-USERS IN THE SUPERNATURAL CATEGORY..
ABOVE EIGHT HUNDRED WE'RE DEALING WITH EITHER THE DEMON TAMSON OR THE SPECTRE.
BOTH OF THOSE ARE CURRENTLY BEYOND THIS CONTINUUM, SIR...
YES. I KNOW.
IT'S SPREADING, WHATEVER IT IS... COVERING THE SOUTH AND HEADING NORTH...
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
DO?
WE WATCH...
...AND THE RIPPLES WIDEN ACROSS AMERICA, SHIMMERING LIKE LIQUID CHROMIUM THROUGH THE VERY DARKEST MINDS... THE DESPERATE... THE DEPRAVED...

...THE DERANGED.
C'MON, WOODRUE, EASY, NOW...
...THE BAYOU...
...COMING OUT OF THE BAYOU...
WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH THEM ALL TONIGHT?
BEATS ME. WOODRUE JUST WENT BERSERK AND STARTED UP WHACKIN' HIS HEAD AGAINST THE CELL DOOR...
TROUBLE IS, ANATOMY LIKE THAT, WHO CAN SAY HOW BAD HE'S HURT HIMSELF?
HOW DO THEY EXPECT US TO COPE WITH FREAKS LIKE THESE?
I HAD TO HELP SEDATE TWO-FACE EARLIER JEEZ, THAT GUY SCARES ME.
OH YEAH? YOU WANNA SEE SOMETHING REALLY SCARY?
THERE...
...THE JOKER'S STOPPED LAUGHING.
...AND THE WAVES ROLL OUT, SWELLING UPON A FEVER-TIDE, THEIR BLACKNESS UNRELIEVED BY FOAM...
13

...AND THE RETURNED MAN GESTURES WITH A STOLEN HAND...
...AND DISMISSES HIS SERVANTS...
...AND THEN GOES OUT...
...GOES OUT WALKIN...
...SHIRTLESS IN THE FREEZING FOG.
AND AFTER A WHILE, IT BEGINS TO SNOW.
14

SWAMP THING
CREATED BY LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON
15

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

MAT...?
MATTHEW CABLE NO LONGER EXISTS.
GUESS AGAIN.
ARCANE.
ARCAAAANE!

I AM RETURNED..
...AND THE ENERGIES THAT CHURN WITHIN ME ARE WILDLESS...
...AS MY VERY GREAT NEED FOR REVENGE.
THEN WHY... DOES ONE...SO POWERFUL... WASTE... SO MUCH TIME... WITH TALK?
BECAUSE YOUR EVENTUAL DESTRUCTION IS ALREADY A FACT, ACCOMPLISHED AND ABSOLUTE...
...AND BECAUSE I DESIRE TO SEE YOU DANCE ONE FINAL, CLUMSY, DESPERATE WALTZ.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
THEN... KILL ME NOW.. IF YOU CAN...
I WILL NOT... DANCE... FOR YOU...
I HAVE ABIGAIL.
AND THE RETURNED MAN LAUGHS...

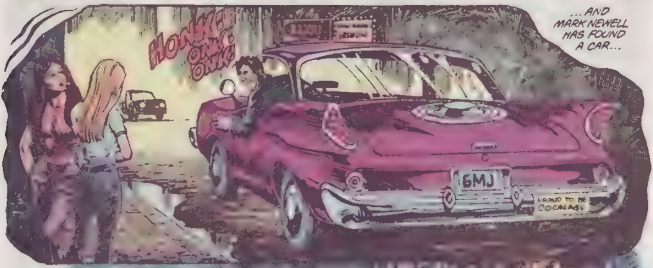
...AND IN HOUMA A YOUNG SAILOR ON SHORELEAVE ASKS SALLY PARKS TO EXCUSE HIM, IT'S JUST THAT HE KNOWS HER FACE FROM SOMEWHERE...

...AND OUTSIDE LAFAYETTE, JODY HERBERT SUDDENLY DECIDES TO TAKE A RIDE ON UP TO THE BAYOU...

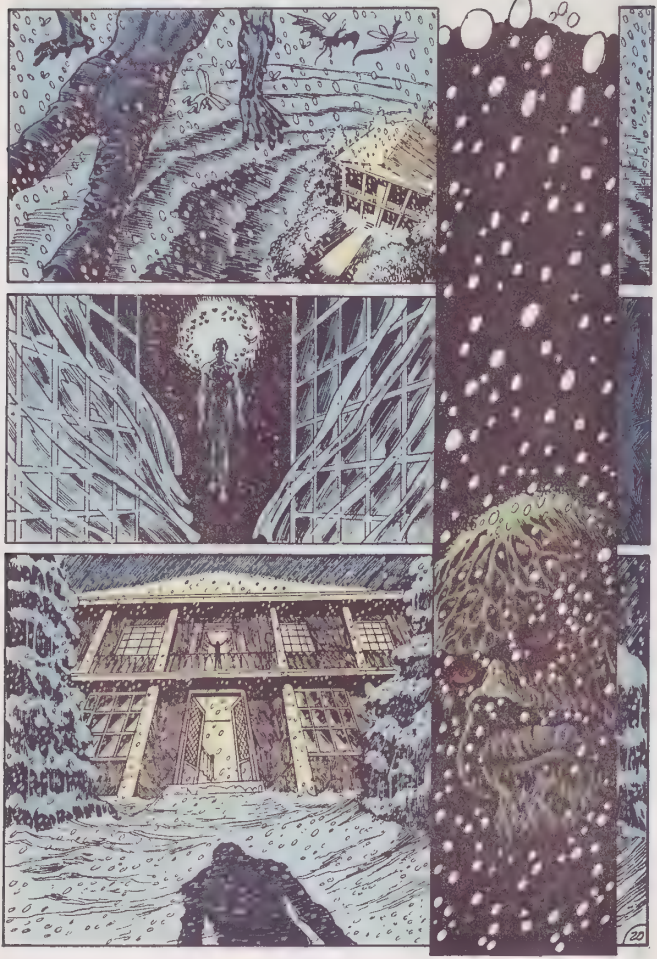
...AND GUS PRITCHETT CALLS OUT OVER A SCHOOLYARD ABANDONED TO SHADOW AND THINKS HOW SWELL IT IS TO BE BACK...

...AND IN MONROE, HATTIE DURLANTE SHUDDERS AND RESOLVES TO GO FOR A WALK RATHER THAN THINK ABOUT THE MESS IN THE BEDROOM...

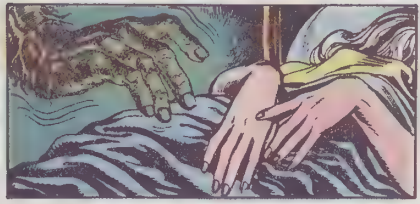
...AND MARK NEWELL HAS FOUND A CAR...



...AND EVERYTHING BAD WITHIN TWO HUNDRED MILES FINDS ITSELF HEADING FOR LOUISIANA WITHOUT KNOWING WHY...


...AND THE RETURNED MAN WALKS HOME, TO PREPARE FOR HIS MANY VISITORS.
20

CRAK!
EEEEEIK!



22
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HOW...LONG...?
HA HA HA HA HA HA
HOW LONG HAS SHE BEEN DEAD??
HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
NEXT: THE BRIMSTONE BALLET

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
31
75¢
CAN. 95¢
U.K. 30p
DEC. 84
SWAMP THING
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.

SWAMP THING

created by LEN WEIN & BERNI WRIGHTSON

I CLOSE MY EYES...

...AND SHE IS ALIVE... IN THE PRIVATE NIGHT... BEHIND MY EYELIDS...

...THE SMELL OF HER SKIN... IN THE DILUTED... AUTUMN... SUNLIGHT...

...THE FINE WHITE HAIRS... UPON HER NECK... UPON HER ARMS...

...AND THEN...

...I OPEN...

...MY EYES...

...AND ABBY IS STILL DEAD.

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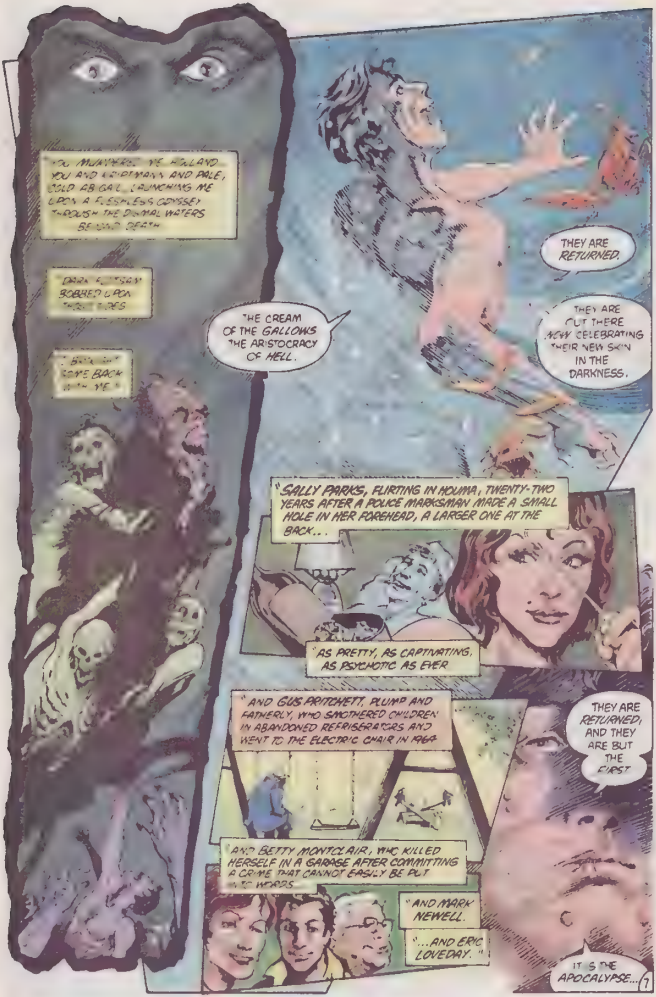
BEHIND ME... THE LAUGHTER OF MY ENEMY... RATTLING IN ANOTHER MAN'S THROAT...
HIS CREATURES SWARM ABOUT US... COAGULATING... FROM THE TAINTED AIR...
SHE MUST NOT REMAIN IN THIS PLACE.
HIS PRESENCE.. CORRUPTS ITS TIMBERS..
THE WALLS... ARE SODDEN... WITH HIS VILENESS...
TO THINK... I MOURNED HIM ONCE WHEN HE WAS DEAD..
"ONE FINAL, CLUMSY, DESPERATE WALTZ"... THAT IS WHAT HE PROMISED ME...
BENEATH MY FINGERTIPS... THE BANISTER... BECOMES A RIB CAGE... RAW AND EXPOSED...
I STUMBLE THROUGH HIS CROOKED HOUSE... HER COLD, STILL WEIGHT... CRUSHED TO MY BREAST..
SHE MUST NOT...
...REMAIN
...IN THIS PLACE.
NO MATTER HOW GROTESQUE...
...OUR GAMBOLS MAY BECOME...
THE BRIMSTONE BALLET

(2) ©MV ALAN MOORE WRITER ★ RICK VEITCH and JOHN TOTLEBEN ARTISTS ★ KAREN BERGER EDITOR ★ TATJANA WOOD COLORIST ★ JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER Presentation

WELL, HOLLAND?
HAVE YOU AT LAST LEARNED DESPAIR?
YOU DID NOT.. HAVE TO KILL HER.. TO TEACH ME DESPAIR, ARCANE.
...BUT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME.. A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING..
..OF ABOMINATION

OH, DEAR.
DID SHE MEAN SO MUCH TO YOU?
NEVER FEAR. I HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS...
SHE ISN'T DEAD AT ALL.
IT WAS ALL A HOAX!
THAT BREATHLESS CARCASS THAT YOU CRADLE SO PROTECTIVELY ...THAT ISN'T HER!
THAT'S JUST A CONSTRUCT, FORMED WITH THE ABILITIES I STOLE FROM MATTHEW CABLE ALONG WITH HIS FLESH.
AREN'T YOU ANGRY AT THE WAY YOU WERE DECEIVED?
WHY DON'T YOU RIP THE CONSTRUCT'S HEAD OFF?
YOU KNOW ...AS A GESTURE OF DEFIANCE
YOU LIE
THIS IS ABBY.
SHE IS DEAD
YES!
REALLY DEAD

WAIT!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
YOU CAN'T JUST WALK AWAY, HOLLAND, YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE BEST OF IT YET...
YOU SEE, SHE ISN'T JUST DEAD..
SHE IS DAMNED, HOLLAND
DAMNED TO HELL
I RIPPED HER SOUL FROM HER AND IT PULSED IN MY HANDS, MILK WHITE AND TRANSLUCENT...
... AND THEN I HURLED IT DOWN INTO THE DEEPEST SEWERS OF THE AFTERWORLD..
TO JUST HEAR IT SCREAM.
SUCH IS MY POWER... THE POWER TO CONDEMN A STAINLESS INNOCENT TO THE PIT...
THE POWER TO RESURRECT THE GUILTY DEAD AND DRESS THEM IN WARM NEW FLESH!...
6


YOU MURDERED ME, HOLLAND. YOU AND KRIPTMANN AND PALE, COLD ABIGAIL, LAUNCHING ME UPON A FLESHLESS ODYSSEY THROUGH THE DISMAL WATERS BEYOND DEATH
DARK FLOTSAM BOBBED UPON THOSE TIDES
"BROKEN SOME BACK WITH ME."
THE CREAM OF THE GALLOWS THE ARISTOCRACY OF HELL.
THEY ARE RETURNED.
THEY ARE OUT THERE NOW CELEBRATING THEIR NEW SKIN IN THE DARKNESS.
"SALLY PARKS, FLIRTING IN HOUMA, TWENTY-TWO YEARS AFTER A POLICE MARKSMAN MADE A SMALL HOLE IN HER FOREHEAD, A LARGER ONE AT THE BACK...
"AS PRETTY, AS CAPTIVATING, AS PSYCHOTIC AS EVER
"AND GUS PRITCHETT, PLUMP AND FATHERLY, WHO SMOTHERED CHILDREN IN ABANDONED REFRIGERATORS AND WENT TO THE ELECTRIC CHAIR IN 1964
THEY ARE RETURNED, AND THEY ARE BUT THE FIRST
"AND BETTY MONTCLAIR, WHO KILLED HERSELF IN A GARAGE AFTER COMMITTING A CRIME THAT CANNOT EASILY BE PUT INTO WORDS
"AND MARK NEWELL.
"...AND ERIC LOVEDAY."
IT IS THE APOCALYPSE...

MY APOCALYPSE!!
RUN, HOLLAND!
RUN ENCUMBERED WITH YOUR STUPID, POINTLESS BURDEN.
FOR THERE IS NO ROCK TO HIDE YOU.
NO BEACON OF INCORRUPTIBLE GOODNESS TO LIGHT YOUR WAY..
8

"THE CELESTIAL FORCE THAT WATCHES OVER US"
MONITOR? WHAT'S HAPPENING IN LOUISIANA?
THE SCREENS ARE GOING CRAZY...
MONITOR?
I SAID...
I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID. PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB ME. I AM CONCENTRATING...
I AM ATTEMPTING TO SUPPRESS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE...
..THE UNCONTROLLABLE URGE TO LOOK AWAY!
9

I MUST NOT... WEAKEN NOW...
I HAVE MADE...TOO MANY MISTAKES... ALREADY...
DREAMS THAT WENT UNQUESTIONED..
I SEE MY UNCLE OVER THERE, TALKING TO MY HUSBAND. THEY'RE INSEPARABLE INSECTS, YOU KNOW...
...YOUR PARENTS FREED THE MONKEY WITH A CHARM SPELLED OUT IN RANDOM LETTERS ON A BOARD.
WAS THERE SOME FURTHER FIEND THAT NUDGED THEIR ARM?
THE ANSWER, MADAME, IS FOR YOU TO KNOW...
THIS IS THE FINAL BATTLE
I MUST NOT WEAKEN NOW...

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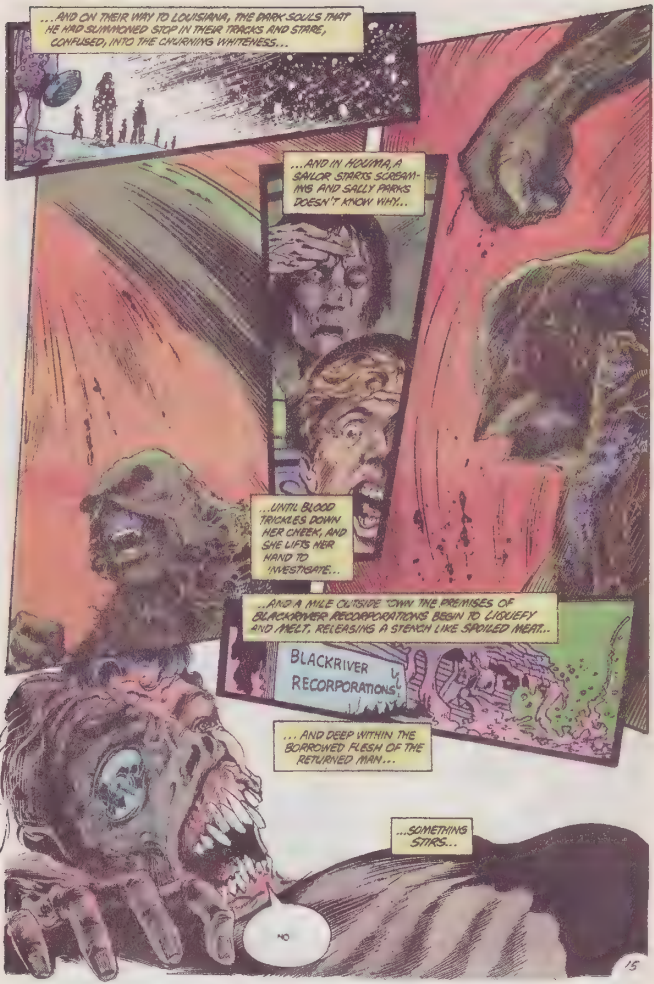
AREN'T YOU TIRED, HOLLAND?
TIRED OF ALL THIS POINTLESS RUNNING?
THE SWAMPS WILL NOT PROTECT YOU...
FOR THIS IS MY WORLD NOW...
THESE ARE MY SWAMPS..
TO DO WITH AS I PLEASE!
YOU SURVIVE AT MY IMPRUDENCE, HOLLAND.
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, THE VICTORY IS MINE.
THERE IS NO POINT IN RUNNING.
THERE IS... NO NEED... FOR RUNNING.
NOT NOW...

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, HOLLAND. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU... HAVE MADE... A MISTAKE... ARCANE.
THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE YOU WERE DEAD
I... AM NOT... HOLLAND.
I AM... SWAMP THING
I AM OF... THE GREEN EARTH
I AM IN... MY PLACE... OF POWER.
...AND YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE COME HERE!

YOU..
YOU HURT ME.
BUT...YOU HAVE NO MAGIC!
UNLESS...
SOME ELEMENTAL FORCE? BUT... WHEN I ENCOUNTERED YOU BEFORE, YOU...
NO, ARDRNE.
YOU HAVE NEVER... ENCOUNTERED ME BEFORE
THIS... IS OUR... FIRST BATTLE...

THIS... IS OUR... FINAL... BATTLE...
YOU CLAIM... THE EARTH... FOR YOUR OWN... ARCANE...
YET YOU HAVE NOT... ONE TENTH... OF THE EARTH'S POWER...
YOU... MOCK... GOD?
YOU MAKE... THE WORLD... WORTHLESS... WITH YOUR LIES!
WOW...
...DARE...
...YOU!?


...AND ON THEIR WAY TO LOUISIANA, THE DARK SOULS THAT HE HAD SUMMONED STOP IN THEIR TRACKS AND STARE, CONFUSED, INTO THE CAWRNING WHITENESS...
...AND IN HOUMA, A SAILOR STARTS SCREAMING AND SALLY PARKS DOESN'T KNOW WHY...
...UNTIL BLOOD TRICKLES DOWN HER CHEEK, AND SHE LIFTS HER HAND TO INVESTIGATE...
...AND A MILE OUTSIDE TOWN THE PREMISES OF BLACKRIVER RECORPORATIONS BEGIN TO LIQUEFY AND MELT, RELEASING A STENCH LIKE SPOILED MEAT...
BLACKRIVER RECORPORATIONS
...AND DEEP WITHIN THE BORROWED FLESH OF THE RETURNED MAN...
...SOMETHING STIRS...
HO

NO!
NOT YOU!
LEAVE ME ALONE! THIS FLESH IS MINE NOW.
GET OUT! GET OUT!!
WE MADE A BARGAIN...
NO! YOU STOLE IT FROM ME... AND THEN YOU KILLED ABBY...
YOU WERE TOO STRONG FOR ME TO CHALLENGE BEFORE, BUT NOW...
CABLE! THE POWER IS WANING! PLEASE...
REMEMBER THE CAR CRASH? IT'S ONLY THE POWER THAT KEEPS THIS BODY ALIVE!
CABLE, YOU FOOL, YOU'LL KILL US BOTH
GOOD. WE BOTH DESERVE IT.
JUST AS LONG... AS I GET TO SEND YOU.
WHERE YOU SENT MY WIFE.
GOOD-BYE, ARCANE.

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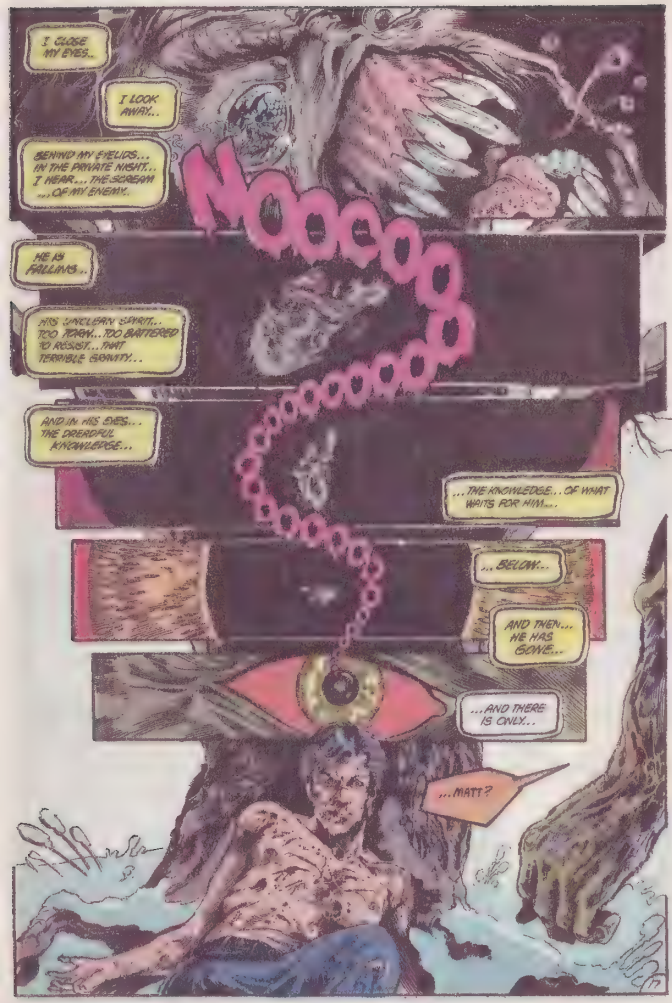
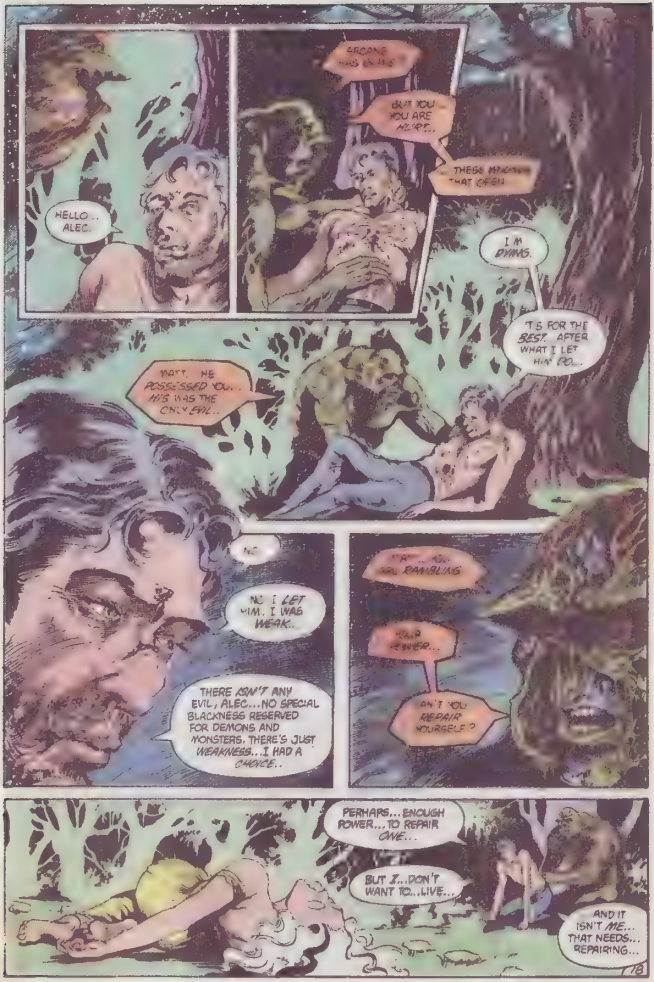
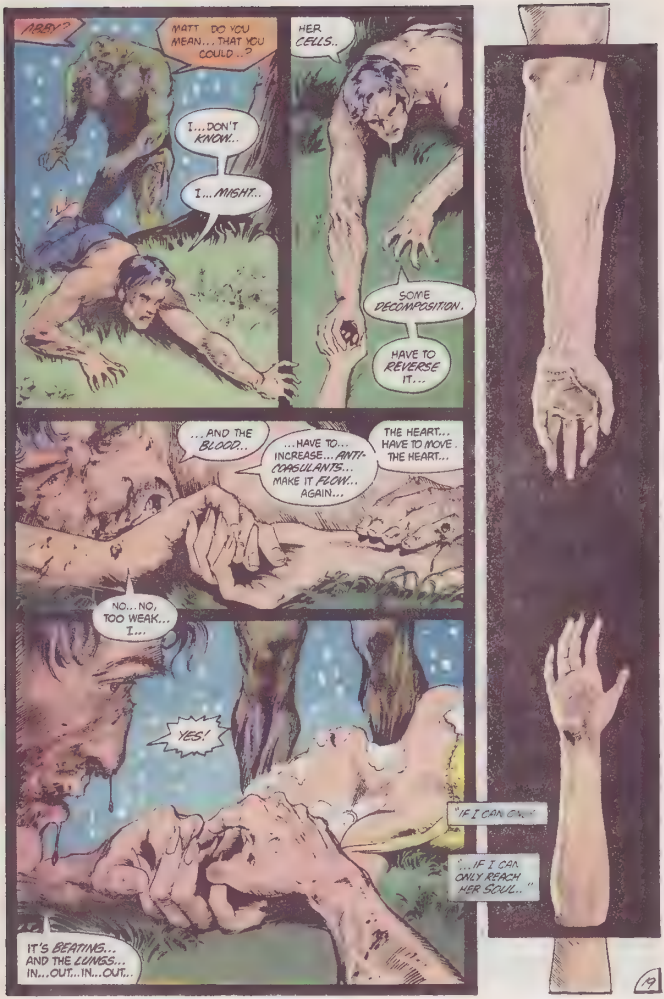
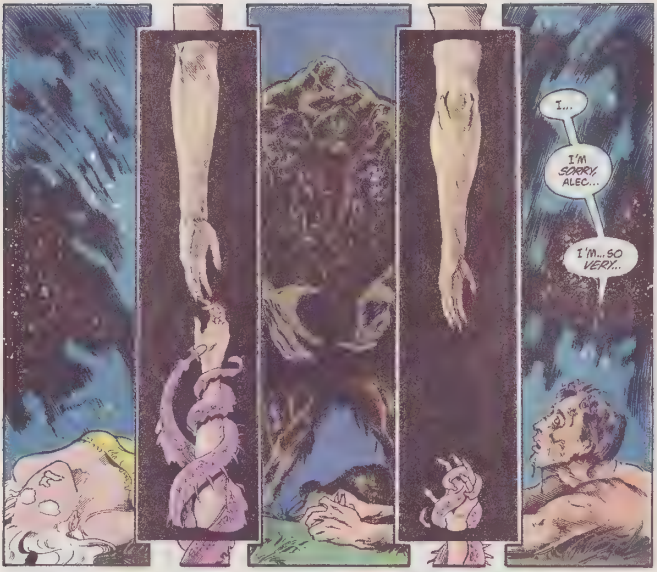

I CLOSE MY EYES...
I LOOK AWAY...
BEHIND MY EYELIDS... IN THE PRIVATE NIGHT... I HEAR... THE SCREAM ...OF MY ENEMY.
NOOOOO
HE IS FALLING...
HIS UNCLEAN SPIRIT... TOO TORN...TOO BATTERED TO RESIST... THAT TERRIBLE GRAVITY...
AND IN HIS EYES... THE DREADFUL KNOWLEDGE...
...THE KNOWLEDGE... OF WHAT WAITS FOR HIM...
...BELOW...
AND THEN... HE HAS GONE...
...AND THERE IS ONLY...
...MATT?


HELLO.. ALEC.
BECAME HIS ENEMY
BUT YOU YOU ARE ALIVE..
THESE MEMORIES THAT OPEN
I'M DYING.
'T'S FOR THE BEST, AFTER WHAT I LET HIM DO...
MATT. HE POSSESSED YOU.. HIS WAS THE ONLY EVIL..
NO.
NO! I LET HIM. I WAS WEAK..
THERE ISN'T ANY EVIL, ALEC... NO SPECIAL BLACKNESS RESERVED FOR DEMONS AND MONSTERS. THERE'S JUST WEAKNESS... I HAD A CHOICE..
RAMBLING
YOUR POWER..
AN'T YOU REPAIR YOURSELF?
PERHAPS... ENOUGH POWER... TO REPAIR ONE..
BUT I... DON'T WANT TO... LIVE...
AND IT ISN'T ME... THAT NEEDS... REPAIRING...


ABBY?
MATT DO YOU MEAN... THAT YOU COULD...?
I... DON'T KNOW..
I... MIGHT..
HER CELLS..
SOME DECOMPOSITION.
HAVE TO REVERSE IT...
...AND THE BLOOD..
...HAVE TO... INCREASE... ANTI-COAGULANTS... MAKE IT FLOW... AGAIN...
THE HEART... HAVE TO MOVE THE HEART...
NO... NO, TOO WEAK... I...
YES!
"IF I CAN, OH..."
"...IF I CAN ONLY REACH HER SOUL..."
IT'S BEATING... AND THE LUNGS... IN...OUT...IN...OUT...


I...
I'M SORRY, ALEC...
I'M...SO VERY..

...VERY... SOR :|-

HOUMA
WHAT A NIGHT! YOU REMEMBER A NIGHT LIKE THIS, BOBBY?
NO, I DON'T REMEMBER A NIGHT LIKE THIS.
ME NEITHER
I THOUGHT WE WAS NEVER GONNA GET THAT SAILOR IN THE DRUNK TANK...
ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT WOMEN WITH HOLES IN THEIR HEADS.
A FRUITCAKE.
YEAH, BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE TEDDY 'N EARL PICKED UP ON THE INTERSTATE?
LITTLE KIDDIES WALKIN' ABOUT IN THE SNOW...
JEEZ!
WHAT IS IT, BOBBY?
WHY 'DYA PULL OVER? IS IT...?
OH.
LOOKY!
THIS GUY'S BEEN IN SOME KINDA ACCIDENT ALL RIGHT. HE AIN'T HARDLY BREATHIN'. GOT STEERIN' COLUMN FRACTURES, THE WORKS...
LOOKS THAT WAY. BUT.. UH.
WHERE'S HIS CAR?

NIGHT LIKE THIS, WHO GIVES A DAMN?
C'MON... LET'S GET HIM IN OUR CAR. MAYBE WE CAN GET HIM TO THE HOSPITAL IN TIME...
YEAH. JEEZ, LOOK AT ALL THIS BLOOD..
I ONLY JUST GOT THROUGH CLEANIN' IT UP AFTER THE SAILOR...
VROOOoooo
SHE LIES... WHERE I LEFT HER...
SHE BREATHES... HER HEART BEATS..
BUT A HEARTBEAT... IS NOT A WOMAN... A BREATH... IS NOT ABBY..
HER BREAST MOVES...
...BUT IT IS EMPTY.
THERE IS... NO ONE THERE.
THE TEARS COME...
I CLOSE MY EYES..

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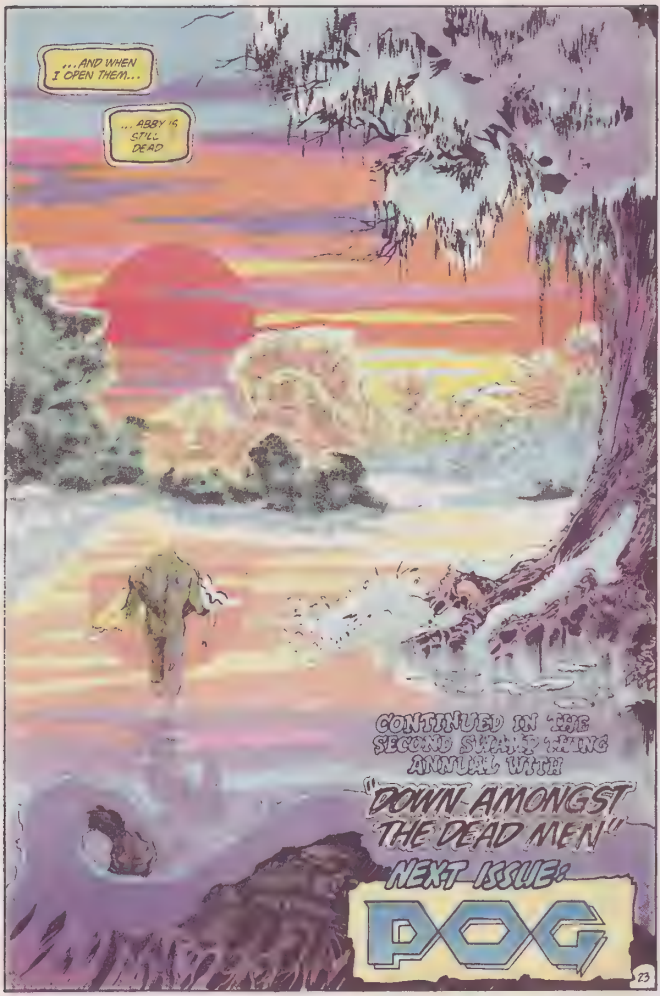
...AND WHEN I OPEN THEM...
...ABBY IS STILL DEAD
CONTINUED IN THE SECOND SWAMP THING ANNUAL WITH
"DOWN AMONGST THE DEAD MEN"
NEXT ISSUE:
DOG

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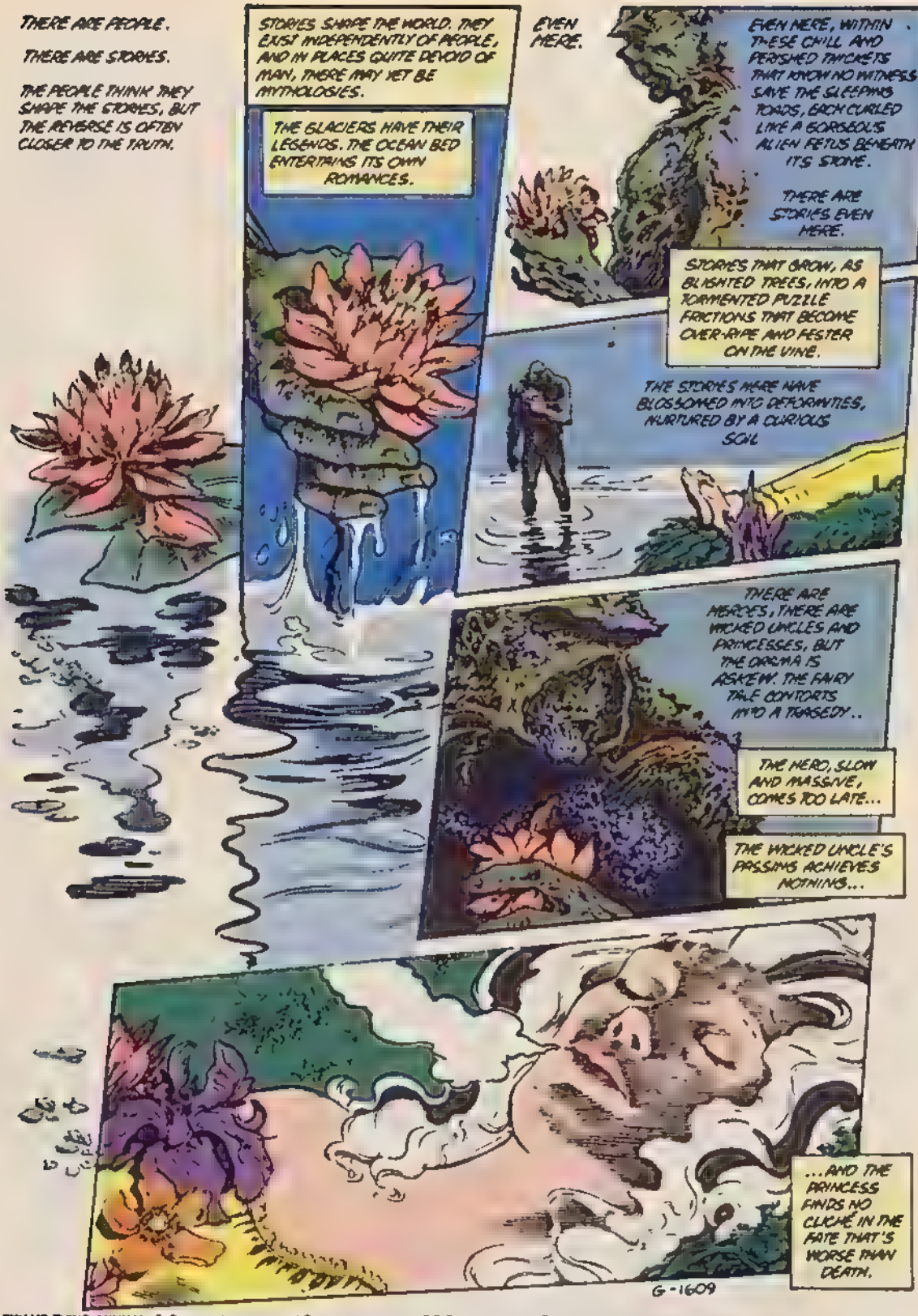
SWAMP THING
BY ALAN MOORE, STEPHEN BISSETTE AND JOHN TOTLEBEN


THERE ARE PEOPLE.
THERE ARE STORIES.
THE PEOPLE THINK THEY SHAPE THE STORIES, BUT THE REVERSE IS OFTEN CLOSER TO THE TRUTH.
STORIES SHAPE THE WORLD. THEY EXIST INDEPENDENTLY OF PEOPLE, AND IN PLACES QUITE DEVOID OF MAN, THERE MAY YET BE MYTHOLOGIES.
THE GLACIERS HAVE THEIR LEGENDS. THE OCEAN BED ENTERTAINS ITS OWN ROMANCES.
EVEN HERE.
EVEN HERE, WITHIN THESE CHILL AND PERISHED THICKETS THAT KNOW NO WITNESS SAVE THE SLEEPING TOADS, EACH CURLED LIKE A GORGEOUS ALIEN FETUS BENEATH ITS STONE.
THERE ARE STORIES EVEN HERE.
STORIES THAT GROW, AS BLIGHTED TREES, INTO A TORMENTED PUZZLE FICTIONS THAT BECOME OVER-RIPE AND FESTER ON THE VINE.
THE STORIES HERE HAVE BLOSSOMED INTO DEFORMITIES, NURTURED BY A CURIOUS SOIL
THERE ARE HEROES, THERE ARE WICKED UNCLES AND PRINCESSES, BUT THE DRAMA IS ASKEW. THE FAIRY TALE CONTORTS INTO A TRAGEDY..
THE HERO, SLOW AND MASSIVE, COMES TOO LATE...
THE WICKED UNCLE'S PASSING ACHIEVES NOTHING...
...AND THE PRINCESS FINDS NO CLICHÉ IN THE FATE THAT'S WORSE THAN DEATH.
G-1609

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CREATED BY
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SWAMP THING
DOWN AMONGST THE DEAD MEN
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KAREN BERGER EDITOR
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JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER

ONCE BEFORE... I STEPPED OUTSIDE... THE CONFINES... OF THIS SHELL...

ONCE WHEN I WISHED TO ESCAPE... THE KNOWLEDGE... OF WHAT I WAS...

I CAN GO... BEYOND MY BODY...

...CAN I GO... BEYOND DEATH?

I REMEMBER THAT THE FIRST STEP... WAS EASY...

NOT SO MUCH... AN EFFORT... AS A GREAT... RELAXATION...

I LAY DOWN...

I CLOSED MY EYES...

I LET GO... OF THE WORLD...

...AND SANK... BENEATH INFINITE... EMERALD FATHOMS.

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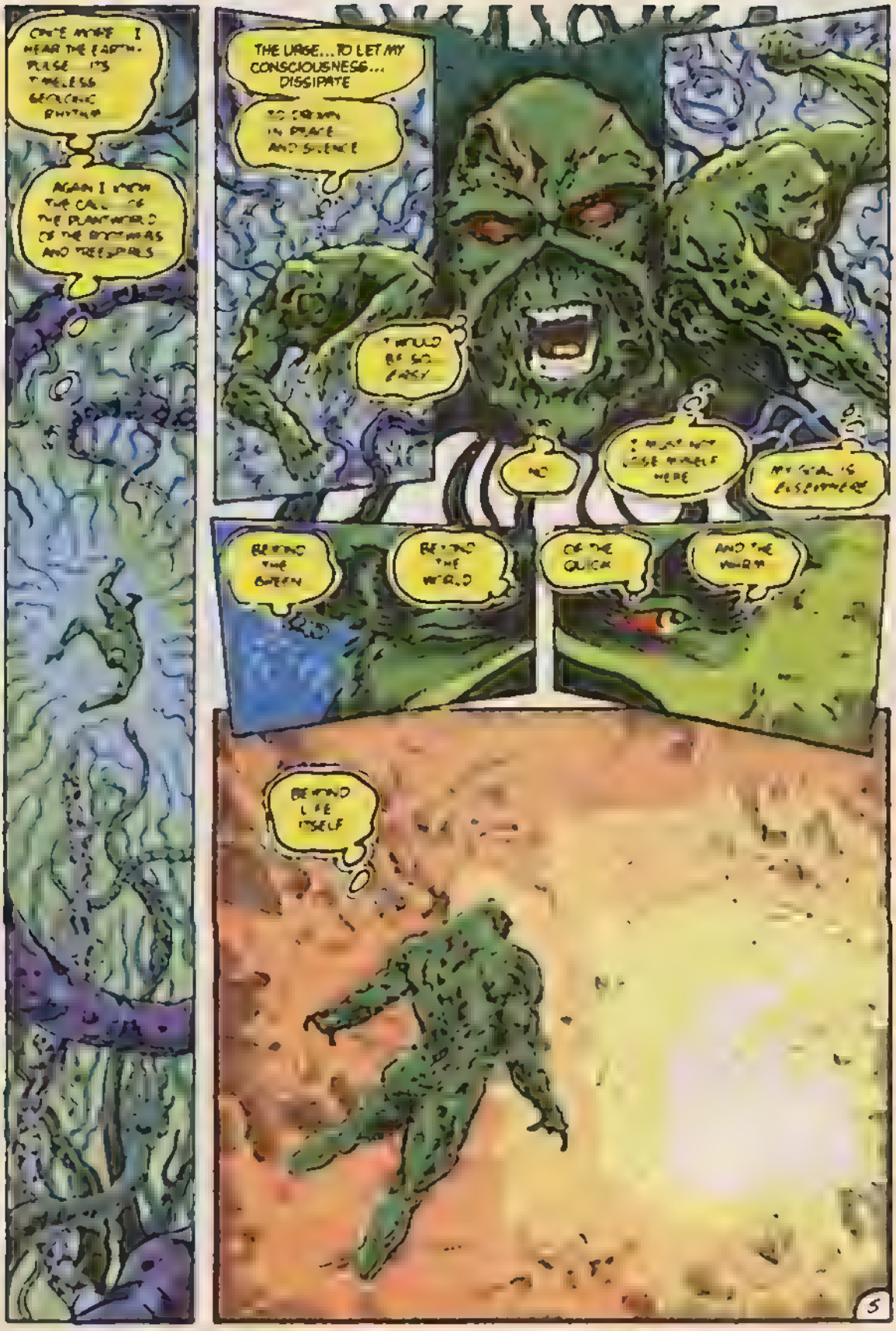

ONCE MORE I HEAR THE EARTH-PULSE ITS TIMELESS GEOLOGIC RHYTHM
AGAIN I KNOW THE CALL OF THE PLANTWORLD OF THE ROOTWEBS AND TREESPIRES
THE URGE... TO LET MY CONSCIOUSNESS... DISSIPATE
TO DROWN IN PEACE AND SILENCE
I WOULD BE SO EASY
NO
I MUST NOT LOSE MYSELF HERE
MY GOAL IS ELSEWHERE
BEYOND THE GREEN
BEYOND THE WORLD
OF THE QUICK
AND THE WARM
BEYOND LIFE ITSELF
5

CAN *THIS*.. BE THE AFTERLIFE? CAN THIS BE... *HEAVEN?*

BUT WHY... IS IT... SO *EMPTY*? WAS THERE *NO ONE* WHO WAS *GOOD* ENOUGH?

NO.. NO, IT CANNOT BE. .YET WHY..IS IT SO.. DESERTED?

SO SILENT...?

OH MY GOD. *HELLO?* IS THAT *SOMEBODY?*

PLEASE, I NEED HELP... I GOT LOST IN THE FOG, AN' MY LITTLE BOY, HE'S AROUND HERE SOMEPLACE..

WHERE *ARE* WE? DO YOU *WORK* AROUND HERE?

LISTEN, YOU MUST THINK I'M CRAZY, BUT..

..BUT I KEEP *TRYIN'* TO REMEMBER HOW I GOT HERE, AN' I JUST *CAN'T* I...

..I WAS DRIVING JERRY TO SCHOOL, AND..

I REMEMBER, JERRY WAS MAKIN' A NOISE IN THE BACK, SINGIN' THIS SONG FROM KIDDIE T.V. I TURNED AROUND TO SHUT HIM UP. .

I WAS JUST PULLIN' OUT INTO THE INTERSECTION, AND...

...AND..

H-HEY...

HEY, WHERE *AM* I?

WUH-WHERE'S *JERRY?*

OH GOD...

OH GOD, THIS IS A NIGHTMARE!

PLEASE.. PLEASE, I WANNA WAKE UP. I WANNA WAKE UP NOW!

MOM?

HEY, MOM, IT'S OKAY...

J-JERRY? WHERE...?

I'M SORRY, MOM. I COULDN'T FOLLOW, NOT RIGHT AWAY BUT I M HERE NOW ... WE CAN GO WHERE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GO.

THANKS FOR LOOKING AFTER HER, MISTER.

JERRY... DO YOU KNOW THIS PLACE?

OH, SURE... IT'S NOT BEEN SO LONG SINCE I WAS HERE LAST TIME.

COME ON .. THERE'S LIGHTS UP AHEAD...

WAIT!

COME BACK!

WHERE IS THIS PLACE?

BUDDY, IF ANYONE HERE HAD BREATH, I'D ADVISE YOU TO SAVE IT.

THEY WON'T BE COMING BACK.

INCIDENTALLY, NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BIG FELLER.

PITY IT COULDN'T BE UNDER MORE PLEASANT CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHEN DID YOU *DIE*?

I... AM NOT.. DEAD

I AM HERE OF MY OWN WILL...

WHO... ARE *YOU*? I DO NOT REMEMBER YOU...

YOU *WOULDN'T*. IN YOUR WORLD I'M *INVISIBLE*. I'VE RUN INTO *YOU* ONCE OR TWICE, THOUGH.

THE NAME'S *DEADMAN*...

...AND IF YOU'RE STILL *ALIVE*, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE REGION OF THE *JUST DEAD*?

"*JUST DEAD*"?

SURE... LIKE THAT WOMAN AND HER SON...

I SAW HER LEAVE HER BODY AND WANDER AWAY FROM THAT CAR-WRECK ON THE INTER-SECTION...

...BUT THE KID LIVED FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES. I HUNG ON TO WAIT FOR HIM.

YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION.

ECTOPLASM. THIS REGION IS CLOSEST TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING. AND ECTOPLASM IS A SORT OF SUB-MATTER THAT MIMICS THE FORMS OF THE REAL WORLD.
IF WE'RE LUCKY, WE MAY EVEN SEE...

THEY'RE COMPLETELY *MINDLESS*. THEY JUST FORM FROM THE ECTO-FOG AT THE POINTS WHERE PARTICULARLY VIOLENT EMOTIONS SEEP THROUGH FROM THE LIVING WORLD.

IF YOU FLY THROUGH THEM, THEY *BURST* AND SMELL *TERRIBLE*.

HEH.

THERE ARE... *FEW PEOPLE* HERE...

RIGHT. WE GET A COUPLE WHO HANG AROUND, TOO SHOCKED TO REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENED, BUT MOST FOLK MOVE ON WHEREVER THEY'RE GOING PRETTY QUICKLY.

WHEN DID YOUR *FRIEND* PASS THROUGH?

YESTERDAY.

HMMM...

IF SHE HADN'T GONE *ON*, I'D HAVE RUN *ACROSS* HER BY NOW. MAYBE WE SHOULD HEAD ON OVER TO THE *LIGHTS*. SHE MAY HAVE GONE THAT WAY...

... AND, FRANKLY, IF SHE'S GONE ANY *OTHER* WAY, YOU BETTER *FORGET* ABOUT HER.

THE *LIGHTS*? WHAT...

... LIGHTS?

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

THOSE LIGHTS.
UH, LISTEN... I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO GO BEYOND THIS POINT. FROM HERE ON YOU'LL HAVE TO GO IT ALONE.
I CAN WAIT HERE TILL YOU GET BACK...
ALONE?
GO ALONE... INTO... THE PRESENCE...
...OF GOD?
GOD?
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY. SHE ALWAYS TREATED ME OKAY...
SHE?
WELL... YEAH.
UH, LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE EXPECTING, BUT AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THERE'S A WOMAN RUNNING THE SHOW. HER NAME'S RAMA KUSHNA...
AS FOR FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND, DO YOU KNOW ANYBODY HERE? MAYBE YOU COULD FIND SOME FRIENDS...
HE'LL FIND FRIENDS, BOSTON BRAND...
FRIENDS...
...AND OTHER STRANGERS.

OH
IT'S YOU.

Y'KNOW, BEING *DEAD*, IT'S LIKE WAITING FOR A *BUS*...

YOU DON'T SEE ANYONE FOR MONTHS AND THEN TWO OR THREE ARRIVE TOGETHER.

COINCIDENCE IS THE SECRET THREAD THAT KNOTS THE WORLD *TOGETHER*, BOSTON BRAND. HAVE YOU BEEN DEAD THESE LONG YEARS WITHOUT LEARNING *THAT*?

THE STRANGER COMES WHERE THE STRANGER IS *REQUIRED*.

YEAH? REQUIRED BY *WHO*?

OKAY, "*I LOVE A MYSTERY*," PLAY IT YOUR WAY...

DEADMAN.. I WILL BE... IN GOOD HANDS... WITH THE STRANGER. WE HAVE MET... BEFORE.

THANK YOU.. FOR YOUR *HELP*

PERHAPS.. *ONE* DAY... I MAY HELP... *YOU*

I SHOULD LIVE SO LONG.

ROTSA RUCK, KEED. I'LL SEE YOU AROUND...

STRANGER. I SEEK... A WOMAN...
YES. ABIGAIL CABLE...
ALTHOUGH HER EVENTUAL FATE IS UNKNOWN TO ME, I HEARD A LITTLE OF THE CONFLICT IN WHICH SHE WAS DISPLACED.
HER UNCLE, THE DEFEATED ANTON ARCANE, PLUNGED THROUGH THIS REGION ON HIS WAY TO HELL, A BLACK AND SHRIEKING COMET, SPITTING MOLTEN TAR...
THE NOISE AND THE STENCH WERE UNBEARABLE.
I KNEW THEN THAT THE LAST OF THE MATTER HAD NOT BEEN HEARD
COME. IF WE ARE TO FIND YOUR FRIEND, WE MUST HURRY..
..ALTHOUGH, IN TRUTH, IT IS NOT VERY FAR.
THESE LIGHTS... I FEEL... AS IF I... REMEMBER THEM..
AS IF.. I SAW THEM... ONCE.. A LONG. TIME AGO..
YES, EVERYONE SAYS THAT.
NOW, HOLD MY HAND WE'RE ALMOST...
...THERE.

THIS . IS *HEAVEN?*

IT IS AN *ASPECT* OF HEAVEN. HEAVEN HAS AS MANY SEMBLANCES AS THERE ARE *CREEDS*..

...AS THERE ARE *SOULS.*

YOU... KNOW IT WELL?

IS.. *THIS*.. YOUR *HOME?*

MY HOME?

NO.

I FEAR I HAVE LONG SINCE BECOME A *STRANGER* IN PARADISE.

I DIDN'T THINK THERE WERE ANY STRANGERS IN PARADISE...
...IT'S FAR TOO SMALL FOR THAT.
ALEC?
ALEC.. HOLLAND?
HOLLAND? THEN I FEAR I AM CONFUSED. I HAD BELIEVED THAT YOU WERE...
...ALEC HOLLAND.
YES.. SO... DID I.
I'M GLAD YOU FOUND OUT EVENTUALLY..
...AND I OUGHT TO THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME GET HERE.
IT WAS.. NOTHING..
ONLY.. A BURIAL...
IT FREED ME I'D BECOME OBSESSED WITH NOT LEAVING MY BODY THERE IN THE SWAMP.
AS A RESULT, I GOT STUCK BETWEEN EARTH AND THE REALM OF THE JUST-DEAD.
IT HAPPENS, SOMETIMES, WITH A VIOLENT DEATH...
...AND IF YOU ARE INDEED THE SHADE OF ALEC HOLLAND, THEN YOUR DEMISE WAS VIOLENT IN THE EXTREME.

YES

THAT'S WHY I'M NOT ANXIOUS TO GIVE UP THE OPTION TO ABANDON IT FOR A WHILE, EVEN THOUGH LINDA WANTS TO.

LINDA? SHE IS HERE?

WHERE ELSE?

SHE WANTS TO GO BACK ON THE MERRY-GO-ROUND, HAVE SOME CHILDREN YOUR WORLD WILL NEED CHILDREN SOON

WHY DID YOU COME HERE? YOU'RE NOT DEAD..

I AM LOOKING FOR ABIGAIL CABLE

N JOLAR, LET ME SEE YOU DO NOT KNOW HER

SHE MAY HAVE PASSED THIS WAY

I KNOW THE WOMAN YOU MEAN. SHE HASN'T BEEN BY HERE, OR I'D HAVE SEEN HER.

LIKE I SAID IT'S A SMALL PLACE

ALEC?

COMING, SWEETHEART...

LISTEN, WHY NOT COME AND SAY HELLO TO LINDA? I'VE TOLD HER ABOUT YOU

NO I DON'T THINK SO. WE.

WE HAVE TO GO NOW THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

ANY TIME

SHE...WAS NOT THERE.

NO.

I FEAR WE HAVE BUT ONE PLACE LEFT TO TRY

YES...

I.. I HAD. HOPED THAT ARCANE... LIBO..

STRANGER..? IT GROWS. COLD..

INDEED.. AND COLDER STILL WITH EACH STEP WE TAKE FROM HIS MYSTERIOUS PRESENCE..

FROM HIS ETHEREAL CONTINENT OF PERPETUAL AFTERNOON

"HIS"?

BUT.. OSADMAN SAID. THAT GOD. WAS *FEMALE*

BOSTON BRAND IS A YOUNG SPIRIT. HE HAS SEEN BUT A FEW JIGSAW FRAGMENTS...

...OF A DESIGN THAT SPREADS OUTWARD FOREVER.

NOW COME...

LET US SEEK *ASCENSION* FOR OUR DESCENT TO *PANDEMONIUM*.

PERMISSION..?

OF COURSE THE ORDERED UNIVERSE IS BUT A MICROSCOPIC BUBBLE IN AN OCEAN OF SEETHING MADNESS

THE FORCES BEYOND THIS POINT ARE NOT TO BE LIGHTLY DISTURBED...

THUS, THERE IS ONE WHO IS APPOINTED TO THIS DISMAL TERRITORY AS A *SENTINEL*, THOUGH OFTEN HIS DUTIES TAKE HIM *ELSEWHERE*.

HE IS HERE NOW.

BUT.. THERE IS... *NOTHING*...

NOTHING BUT.. *BLACKNESS*..

THE BLACKNESS IS A PART OF WHAT HE IS NOW PREPARE YOURSELF...

...AS HE REVEALS THE *LIGHT*.

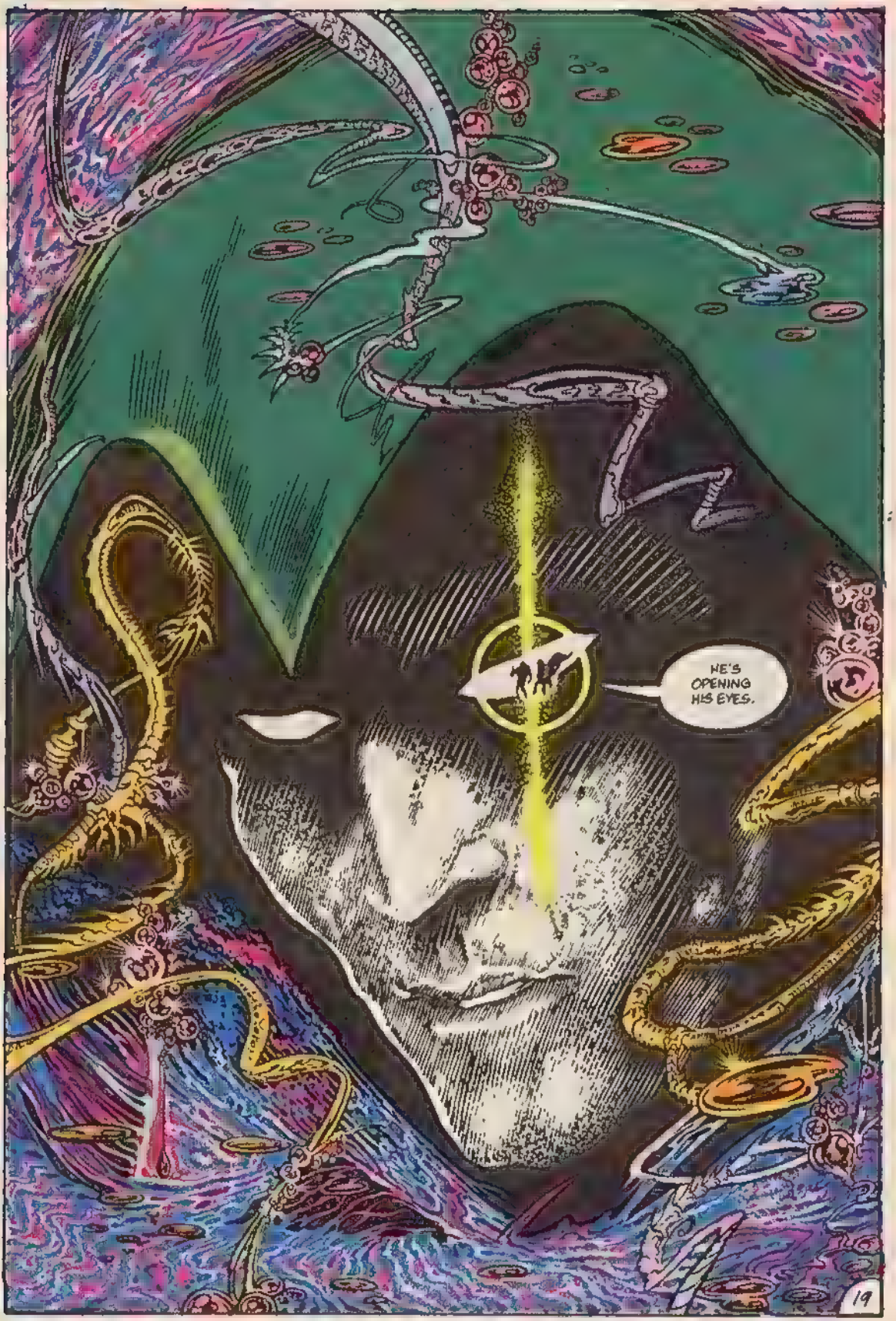
THAT BAND.. OF *WHITENESS*... GROWING WIDER...

STRANGER...?

WHAT IS... *HAPPENING*?

HAPPENING?

CAN'T YOU *GUESS*?


HE'S OPENING HIS EYES.

WHO APPROACHES... THE SPECTRE?

ARE YOU NATIVE TO THESE BORDERLANDS OF FORM AND REASON?

NO.

A STRANGER.

AHH.

IT IS YOU, BROTHERLESS ONE...

...AND ANOTHER BESIDE YOU? I SHALL CONDENSE MY SUBSTANCE THAT I MAY SEE HIM MORE KEENLY.

THERE THERE THERE THERE THERE

THERE

AN EARTH ELEMENTAL.

HOW STRANGE. I HAD THOUGHT THEM ALL LONG SINCE DESTROYED...

WHAT IS YOUR NAME, CREATURE, AND WHY HAS THE GRAY WALKER BROUGHT YOU TO ME?

I..

I.. AM. THE SWAMP THING

I SEEK A FRIEND

THERE ARE NO FRIENDS IN THIS PLACE

IT IS TOO LARGE

DO YOU REFER TO THE WOMAN ABIGAIL CABLE?

YOU ?

YOU HAVE SEEN HER ?

OF COURSE

SHE IS CONSIGNED TO THE UNSPEAKABLE REALMS BENEATH

... AND THAT IS WHERE SHE MUST STAY!

STAY. ?

NNNNaaaaaa!!!

CONTAIN YOURSELF! THIS IS ONE WHO CANNOT BE FOUGHT.

SPECTRE! HEAR ME! THE WOMAN WAS CONDEMNED BY ONE WHO HAD NO RIGHT!

ALL THAT HAPPENS, HAPPENS BY DECREE OF *ONE WILL*.

THERE IS ONE VOICE THAT SPEAKS IN *ALL* THINGS.

IF THE WOMAN IS *CONDEMNED*, THEN THAT IS THE FATE SET ASIDE FOR HER

BUT IF SHE IS *UNJUSTLY* CONDEMNED TO HELL, THEN HELL HAS NO *REASON*...

...AND IF THAT IS *SO*, SPECTRE, THEN *PARADISE ITSELF* IS AN EMPTY CONFECTION.

PERHAPS...

YET, IF THINGS ARE AS YOU SAY, THEN WOULD NOT HER RETURN FROM DEATH RENDER *LIFE ITSELF* MEANINGLESS?

SUCH THINGS ARE NOT ALLOWED, STRANGER.

NO?

THEN WHAT OF *JIM CORRIGAN*?

HAHAHA HAHA HAHAHA HA HA!!

YOUR CLEVERNESS HAS NOT DIMMED, STRANGER, NOR YOUR IMPUDENCE.

OF ALL THE PRESENCES, YOU WERE ALWAYS MY FAVORITE.

YOU MAY PASS.

STRANGER.
WHO WAS JIM CORRIGAN ?
HE WAS.
..WHILE HE LIVED

THIS PLACE..

IT IS.. *TERRIBLE*.

NOT SO TERRIBLE AS OUR *DESTINATION*.

WE ARE APPROACHING THE VERY *EDGE* OF RATIONAL BEING HERE.

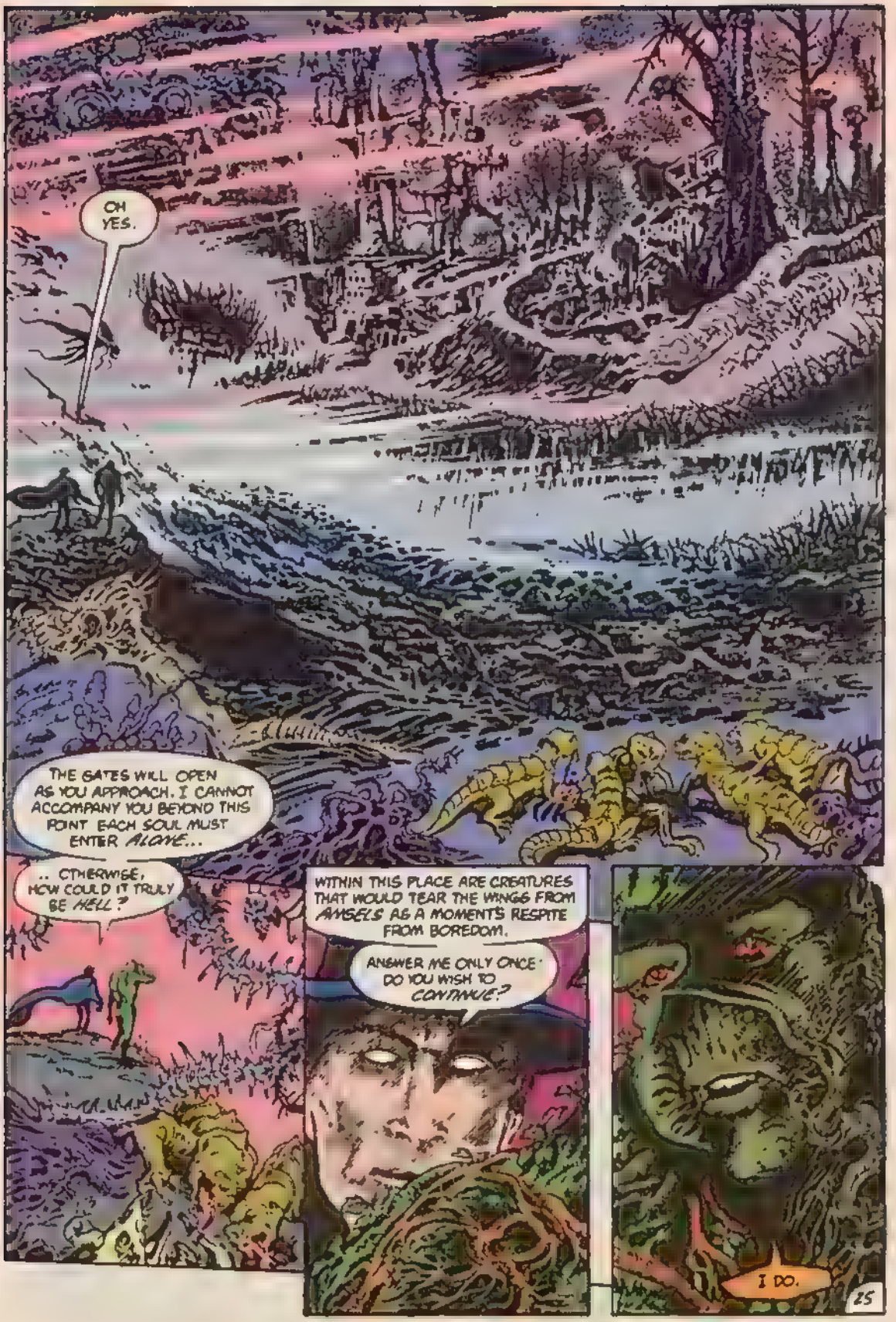
WHAT YOU SEE ABOUT YOU IS BUT THE *THUMB-PRINT* OF CHAOS.

A LITTLE WAY AHEAD THE SENSELESS RAGING OF THE *CHAOPLASM* BEGINS, AND CONTINUES OUT TO *INFINITY*.

WE APPROACH THE LAST PLACE THAT CAN TRULY BE *CALLED* A PLACE.

AND.. THIS *PLACE*...

IT IS... *HELL?*


OH YES.
THE GATES WILL OPEN AS YOU APPROACH. I CANNOT ACCOMPANY YOU BEYOND THIS POINT. EACH SOUL MUST ENTER ALONE...
.. OTHERWISE, HOW COULD IT TRULY BE HELL?
WITHIN THIS PLACE ARE CREATURES THAT WOULD TEAR THE WINGS FROM ANGELS AS A MOMENT'S RESPITE FROM BOREDOM.
ANSWER ME ONLY ONCE: DO YOU WISH TO CONTINUE?
I DO.

AHH...
IT WARMS MY HEART TO MEET WITH THEE AGAIN..
...AND MEET WITH COURAGE, FREE FROM HESITATION..
...OR CAN IT BE YOU ARE AFRAID OF PAIN...
...AND SIMPLY LACKING IN IMAGINATION?
NO MATTER. I AM CONFIDENT YOUR PLAN AFFORDS AMUSEMENT RARE...
...FOR ETRIGAN.

ETRIGAN.

AH, YES. THE DEMON THAT FANCIES HIMSELF HALF A *MAN*

I HAVE *HEARD* OF YOU

'OH, KETTLE! THOU ART BLACK!" THE POT EXCLAIMS *I* KNOW ONE MORE AMBIVALENT FAR THAN I..

A LONELY SOUL, WHO, MENTIONING NO NAMES, WILL NOT CHOOSE 'TWIXT THE *SULFUR* AND THE *SKY*

WHO WILL NOT SERVE *ABOVE*, NOR REIGN *BELOW*, BUT WALKS A PATH 'TWIXT *MOLOCH* AND THE *MAHESUR*.

WHO DO I SPEAK OF? IS IT ONE WE KNOW? OR COULD I BE REFERRING TO.

ENOUGH.

I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR ANY MORE OF THIS.

IF YOU HAVE COME TO MOCK, THEN BEGONE TO WHATEVER PIT SPAWNED YOU.

TO *MOCK*? WHAT? I? 'TIS *HELP*, SIR, THAT I BRING

..JUST AS THE BRUTE BEHIND YOU AIDED *ME* WHEN I PURSUED THE DISGUSTFUL *MONKEY KING*

I WOULD *REPAY* HIS KINDNESS

...FOR A *FEE*.

YOUR DISTORTIONS, THOUGH CUNNINGLY EXPRESSED, FAIL TO ENTERTAIN ME

A FEE?

AND WHAT IS THE PRICE OF A DEMON'S HIRE?

YOU MAY DECIDE. WHATEVER SUITS YOU *BEST*.

WHAT IS THIS *BLOOM* YOU WEAR UPON YOUR BREAST?

THIS?
IT IS A FLOWER, PLUCKED UPON THE WESTERN SLOPE OF HEAVEN.
HOW PRECIOUS. LET THIS BLOSSOM BE MY FEE, TO PLANT WITHIN YON DARK SATANIC MILL...
...AND HAVE ITS BEAUTY THERE FOR ALL TO SEE, COMPARED WITH WHICH, HELL SHALL GROW BLEAKER STILL.
NOW, GATHER TO ME, CREATURE OF THE FEN, AND WE SHALL WALK, AS ONE, BEYOND THOSE WALLS 'MIDST SHRIEKING MAIDS AND SOBBING GENTLEMEN.
THE GATES SWING OPEN! THE AVERNO CALLS!
ETRIGAN! WAIT!
YOU CANNOT ACCOMPANY HIM! THE RULES...
THE RULES? AND IF I BREAK THESE RULES, PRAY TELL SHALL I BE PUNISHED?
SENT, PERHAPS, TO HELL?
HAHAHAH

ETRIGAN... THE ONE I SEEK...

HAVE YOU.. SEEN HER?

HOW COULD I MISS HER, IN THIS FORTRESS DIRE, WHERE ALL ONCE WARM AND SWEET GROWS COLD AND SOUR?

AGAINST THE GRIME AND ROT AND BLOOD-STREAKED MIRE SHE STOOD.

...AS PALE, AS RADIANT...

...AS A FLOWER

HO! ETRIGAN PLANTS FLOWERS!

WE'D HEARD THAT YOU WERE NOW HALF A MAN...

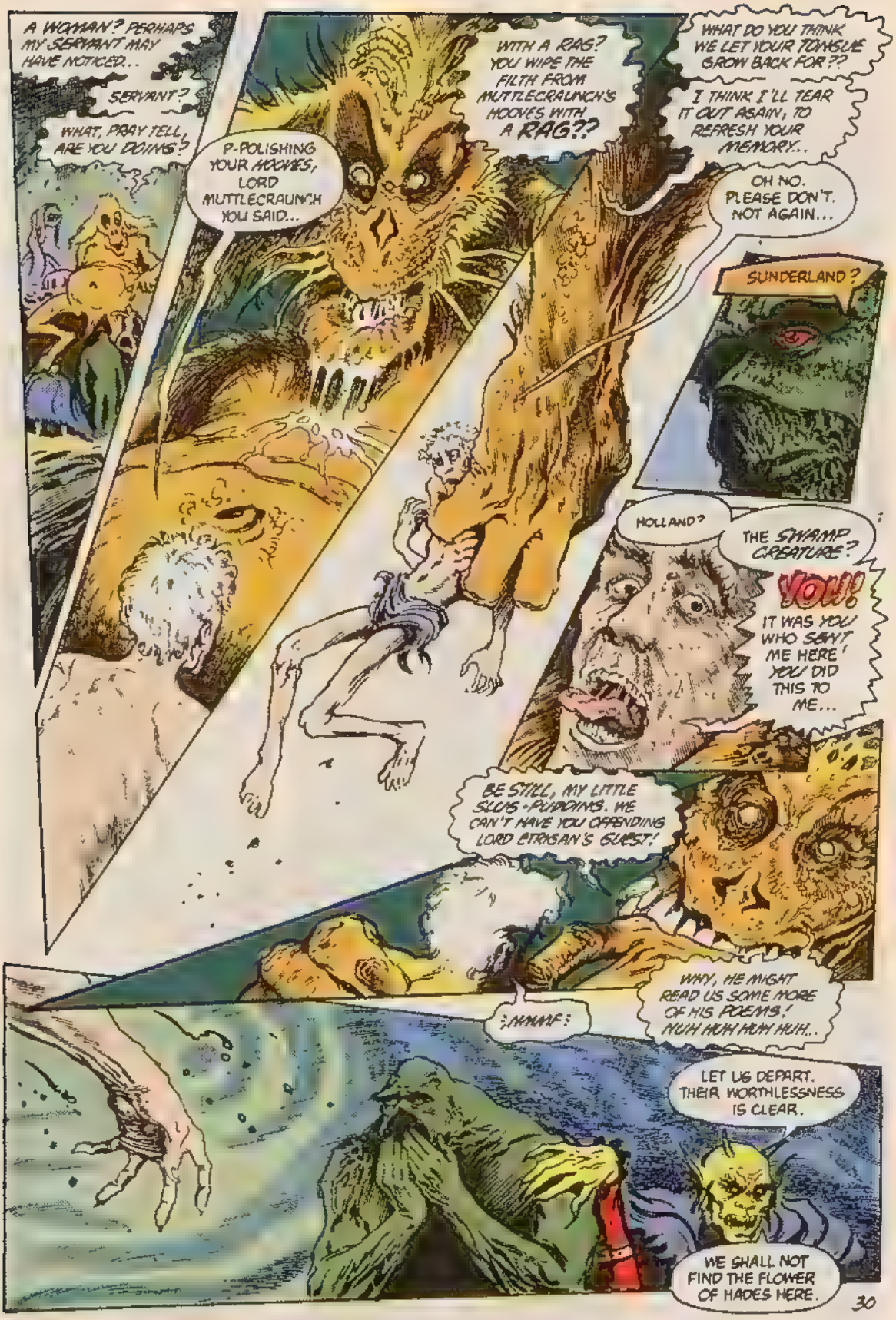
BUT IT SEEMS THAT YOU ARE RATHER HALF A WOMAN!

MUTTLECRAUNCH, YOU TUMOROUS EXCRESCENCE. HAVE A CARE! ETRIGAN'S A RHYMING DEMON NOW, AND FAR ABOVE SUCH BANTER WITH HIS KIN.

AREN'T YOU, ETRIGAN?

FRIENDS MUTTLECRAUNCH AND FLUTCH, YOUR WIT REMAINS LESS CAUSTIC THAN THE POX WHICH GNAWS YOUR BRAINS.

TO SPARE YOUR TYMPANTS, RESPOND WITHOUT DELAY: WE SEEK A WOMAN. HAS SHE PASSED THIS WAY?


A WOMAN? PERHAPS MY SERVANT MAY HAVE NOTICED..
SERVANT?
WHAT, PRAY TELL, ARE YOU DOING?
P-POLISHING YOUR HOOVES, LORD MUTTLECRAUNCH YOU SAID...
WITH A RAG? YOU WIPE THE FILTH FROM MUTTLECRAUNCH'S HOOVES WITH A RAG??
WHAT DO YOU THINK WE LET YOUR TONGUE GROW BACK FOR??
I THINK I'LL TEAR IT OUT AGAIN, TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY..
OH NO. PLEASE DON'T. NOT AGAIN...
SUNDERLAND?
HOLLAND?
THE SWAMP CREATURE?
YOW!
IT WAS YOU WHO SENT ME HERE! YOU DID THIS TO ME...
BE STILL, MY LITTLE SLUG-PUDDING. WE CAN'T HAVE YOU OFFENDING LORD ETRIGAN'S GUEST!
;HMMF!
WHY, HE MIGHT READ US SOME MORE OF HIS POEMS! HUH HUH HUH HUH..
LET US DEPART. THEIR WORTHLESSNESS IS CLEAR.
WE SHALL NOT FIND THE FLOWER OF HADES HERE.

DEMON...

HOW .. COULD GOD... *ALLOW*... SUCH A PLACE ?

THINK YOU *GOD* BUILT THIS PLACE, WISHING MAN ILL AND NOT LUSTS UNCONTROLLED OR SWORDS UNSHEATHED?

NOT GOD, MY FRIEND. THE TRUTH'S *MORE* HIDEOUS *STILL*: THESE HALLS WERE CARVED BY *MEN* WHILE YET THEY BREATHED.

GOD IS NO PARENT OR *POLICEMAN GRIM* DISPENSING TREATS OR PUNISHMENTS TO ALL.

EACH SOUL CLIMBS OR DESCENDS BY ITS OWN WHIM. HE *WATCHES*, BUT HE CANNOT PREVENT THEIR FALL.

WE SUFFER AS WE *CHOOSE*. NOTHING'S AMISS. *ALL* TORMENTS ARE DESERVED...

...NONE MORE THAN *THIS*.

HUH· HOLLAND?

HUH· HOW HUH· NICE TO SEE YOU...

CONTINUED ON 2ND TO LAST FOLLOWING

HELLO, ARCANE

I MUH-MUST LOOK QUITE A MUH-*MESS*...

INSECT EGGS, YOU KNOW MUH-HATCHING, INSUH-SIDE ME...

VERY APPROPRIATE. *HA HA HA HA*...

SUH-STILL, I MUH-HAD MY RUH-*REVENGE*, DIDN'T I? YUH-YOU *HAVE* CUH-COME FOR MUH-MY *NIECE*, I TAKE IT?

SHE'S UP AHEAD.

WUH-WHEN YOU SUH-SEE HER, YOU WON'T WUH-*WANT* HER.

NUH-NO! WAIT! PUH-PLEASE, BEFORE YOU GUH-GO...

HUH-HOW MANY YEARS HAVE I BUH-*BEEN* HERE?

SINCE YESTERDAY

YESTERDAY?

EEEEEEEEEEEEE

HE SAID THAT... SHE WAS AHEAD... THAT I WOULD NOT WANT HER...
EEEE

HE PUSHED US TO ONE SIDE
ENOUGH!!

THE BUGGER'S BLED MY NEB! IT IS SOME ELEMENTAL...
FOOL! WOULD YOU FIGHT ALL HELL? YOUR PRIZE IS HOW! TAKE UP YOUR FALLEN BLOSSOM NOW, AND RUN!
SO, ETRISAN HALF-A-MAN, YOU AND THE EARTH-GENII WORK TOGETHER TO DEPRIVE US OF OUR SPOILS!
I HAD HEARD YOU HAD GROWN SOFT WITH MORTALS.
WHAT BRIBE WERE YOU OFFERED?
I GAINED A FLOWER. HE TAKES ONE, IN RETURN. AS FOR MY SOFTNESS, JUDGE IT...
"... AS YOU BURN!"
HHAULPFSSH!!
THE HALF-A-MAN HAS TURNED UPON HIS KIN!
LET US RIP THE CONCEITED VERSES FROM HIS THROAT, ALONG WITH THE VEINS!

NO!

YOU RUH-RESCUED HER!

BUT THUH THAT WAS MY *DEFENCE!* THAT WAS ALL I HAD LUH-*LEFT* IN THIS PLACE! SHE MUST STUH-*STAY!* DUH DAMNED LIKE *ME*..

DAMNED LIKE MEEEEEEE

AS FLIES AROUND SPOILED MEAT THEY CONGREGATE, NOT FOR REVENGE, EACH SLOBBERING LIKE A HOUND

IF SHE YOU CLASP IS TO AVOID THEIR FATE--

--WE MUST BE SWIFT TO GAIN THE *HIGHER GROUND!*

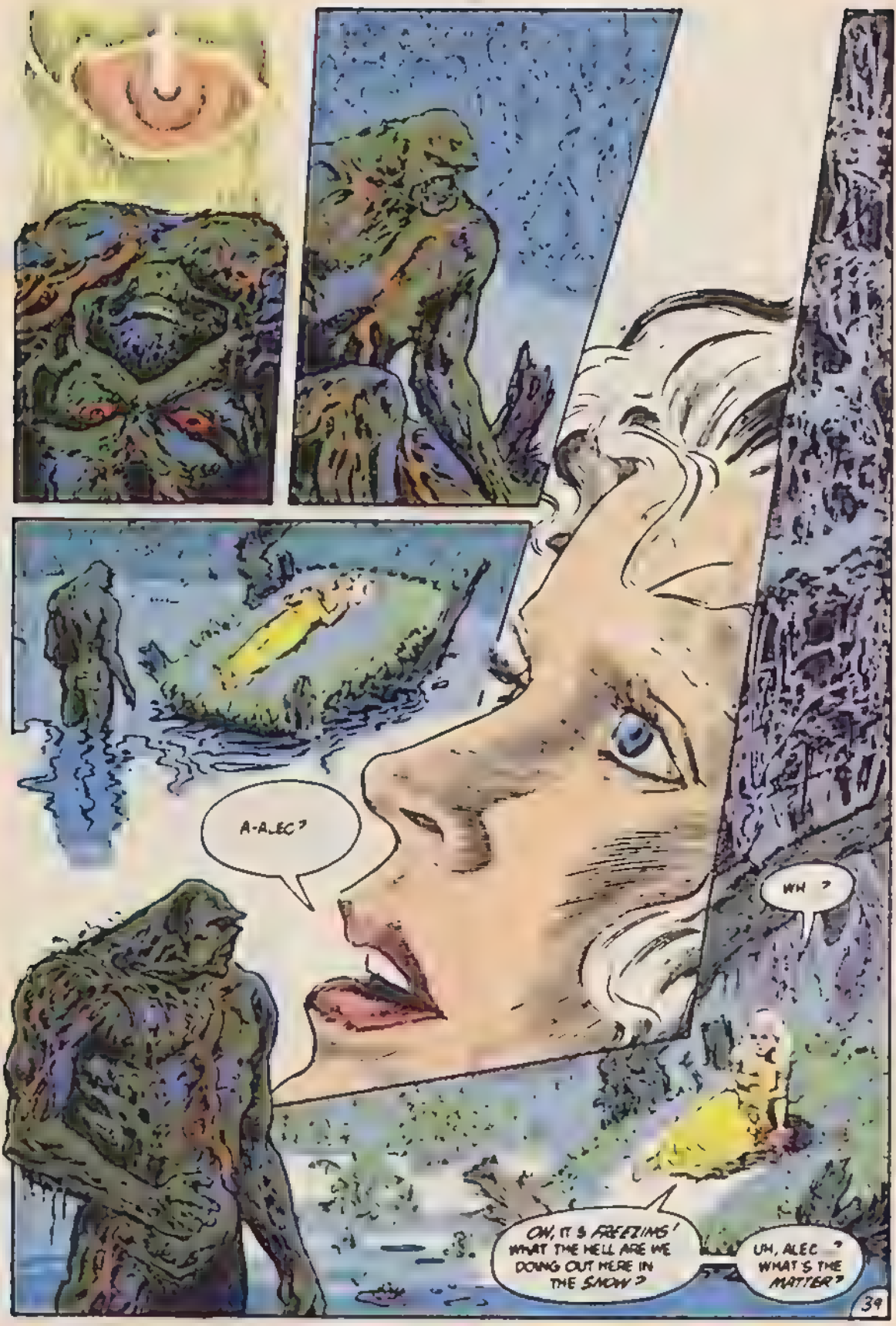
CLIMB! THOUGH I MAY REMOVE YOU FROM THIS PLACE, THE MAGICKS USED REQUIRE BOTH *TIME*..

AND *SPACE*

CLIMB FASTER, SCUM-FLAGONS! DON'T GIVE HIM PAUSE TO OPEN A CHYMIC WINDOW!
B-BUT, LORD RUNDELTHRATT... HE EMPLOYS THE EXHALATION INFERNAL...
CLIMB!
ETRIGAN... THEY ARE ALMOST... UPON US...
BE STILL! 'TIS SPACE ITSELF I SEEK TO REND.
ONE SLIP MAY TEAR THE CLOTH FROM END TO END!
... OF RARE GEOMETRY.
AAAAA!
THOU QUANTUM WAPS AND CHERUBS BY WHOSE DANCE IS SUBSTANCE FORMED TO SHAPE THE FIELDS, WE KNOW YOUR PERFECT WALTZ THAT CONJURES FORM FROM CHANCE MUST PAUSE, TO FREE US FROM THESE WASTES BELOW.
BY ROOT OF MINUS NINE AND CIRCLE SQUARED SET RIGHT AND TRUE AGAINST DIMENSIONS THREE LET OUR ILL-ANGLED PASSAGE BE PREPARED BETWEEN THE FOLDS...

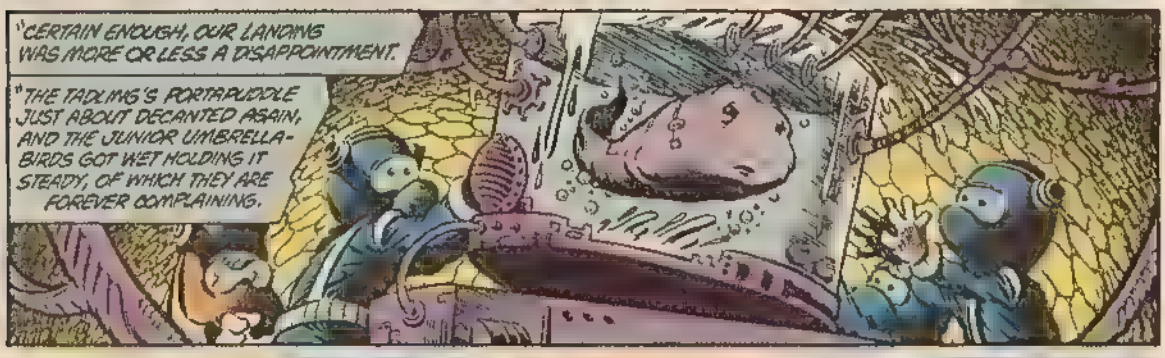
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

THE PORTAL IS DILATED! KICK HIM FREE! YOU HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE ON SUCH AS ME!
ARCANE! LET GO...
I HATE YOUDIESCUMKILL YOU MURDER EATYOURBRAINS HATE TEAR YOUR HEARTKILL YOU DEADDEADDEAD
SKUNK
:UUK:
NOW, TAKE HER FROM THESE STEWS AND FROZEN LAKES. SHE WILL REMEMBER NOT WHAT DID OCCUR, BUT IF IT PLEASE YOU, TELL HER WHEN SHE WAKES...
... A FLOWER GROWS YET IN HELL THAT'S NAMED FOR HER
HA HA HA

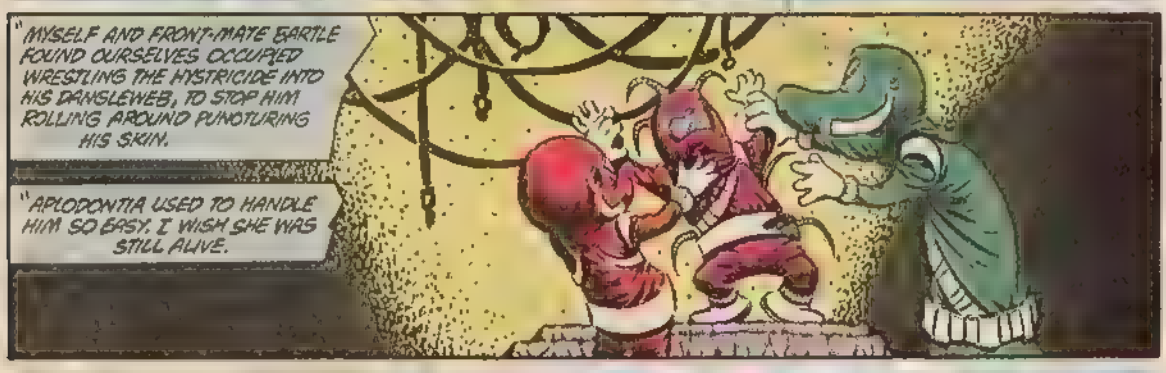

A-ALEC?
WH ?
OH, IT'S FREEZING! WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DOING OUT HERE IN THE SNOW?
UH, ALEC ... ? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

YOU'RE CRYING

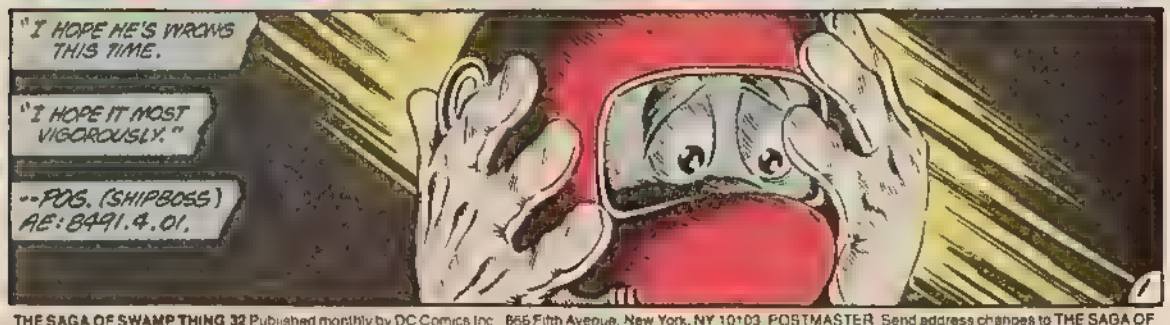
SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
32
75¢
CAN 95¢
U K 30p
JAN 85
SWAMP THING
THE NEW
THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW.


"CERTAIN ENOUGH, OUR LANDING WAS MORE OR LESS A DISAPPOINTMENT.
"THE TADLING'S PORTAPUDDLE JUST ABOUT DECANTED AGAIN, AND THE JUNIOR UMBRELLA-BIRDS GOT WET HOLDING IT STEADY, OF WHICH THEY ARE FOREVER COMPLAINING.

"'FIND THE LADY' HELD UP CONSIDERABLE WELL TO THE ENTRY-BURN, SO IT APPEARS THAT DR. STRIGIFORME WAS WRONG ABOUT THAT... BUT THEN HE MOSTLY IS, THESE WHILES.


"MYSELF AND FRONT-MATE BARTLE FOUND OURSELVES OCCUPIED WRESTLING THE HYSTRICIDE INTO HIS DANGLEWEB, TO STOP HIM ROLLING AROUND PUNCTURING HIS SKIN.
"APLODONTIA USED TO HANDLE HIM SO EASY. I WISH SHE WAS STILL ALIVE.

"HE WAS RAVING FEARSOMELY BAD. JUST BEFORE US MAKING OUR FIRST BOUNCE, I HEARD HIM SHOUT 'THERE IS NO LADY!' AND THEN 'TRIFLES! TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR!'



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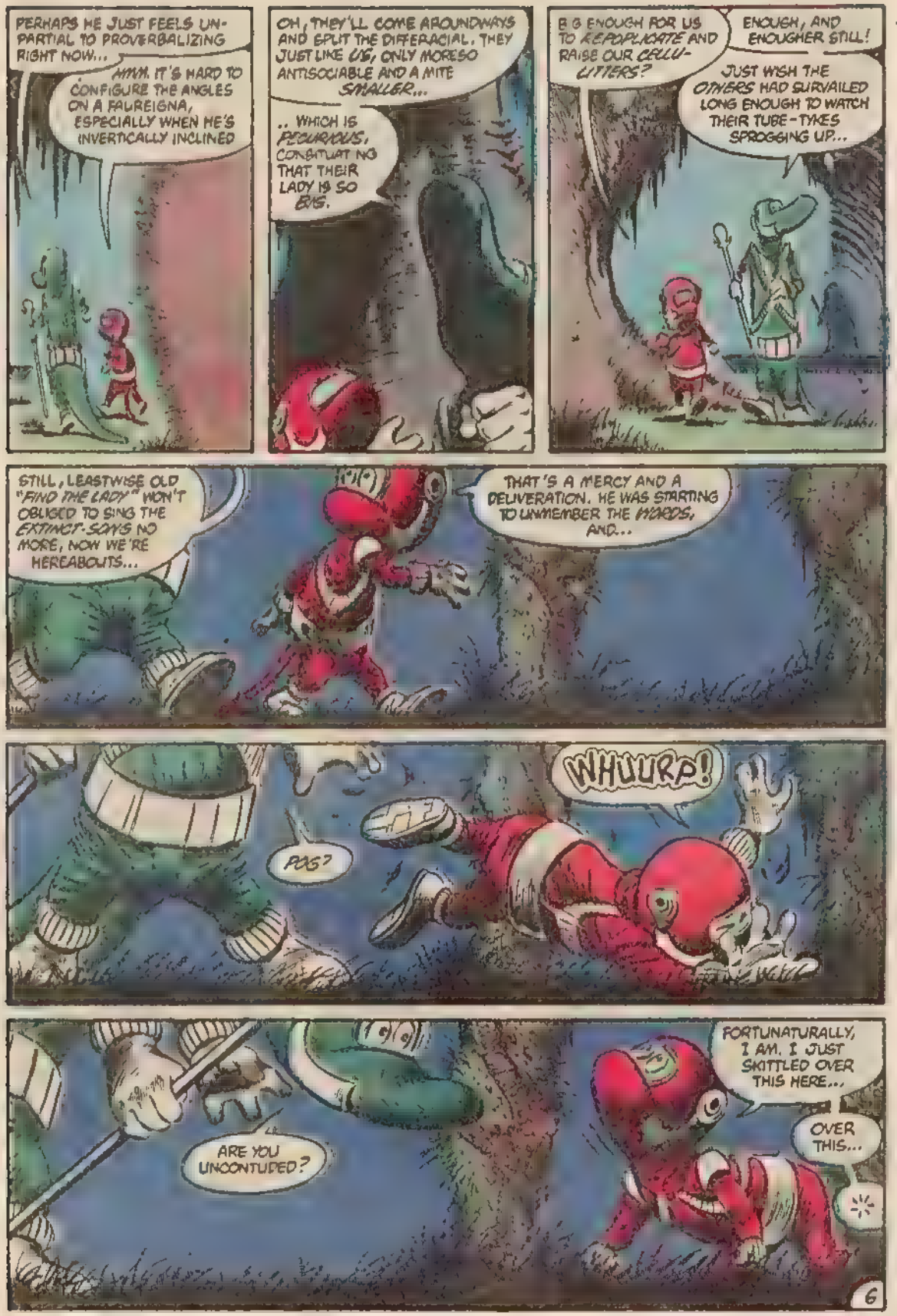
ON ALAN MOORE . SHAWN McMANUS . KAREN BERGER . TATJANA WOOD . JOHN COSTANZA
WRITER GUEST ARTIST EDITOR COLOR ST LETTERER

:FNIF:
MMMM.
ATMOSPHERICALS ABOUT TOLERABLE TO MIDDLING, AND GRAVITIES SUFFICIENT TO KEEP THE STUMP-WATER SETTING IN THE STUMP.
BY MY CALCULATEMENTS, YOU CAN DISENTRAIL WITH COMPLETE DIPLOMATIC IMPUNITY...
I... UH...
3

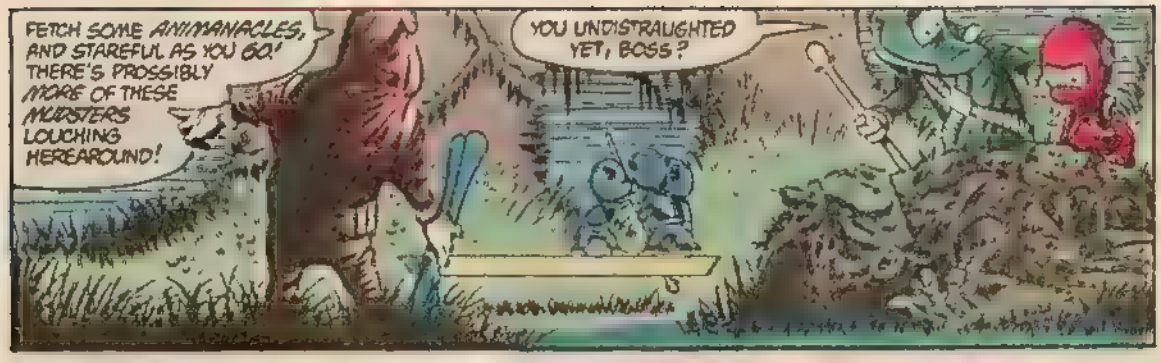
I... THINK WE FOUND THE LADY.
WE FOUND HER? AFTER ALL THESE INTERMINATIONS AND MILLENDERINGS? YOU'RE NOT ABMUSING ME, BOSS?
MAKING ABMUSEMENTS? ABOUT THE LADY? DEFINFINITELY NOT!
GO HELP DISTRANGLE THE HYSTRICIDE AND TELL THE UMBRELLABIRDS TO BREAK OUT THE SKIPS...
...AND DON'T BE UNMEMBERED TO TELL THE TADLING, AND SEE IF OLD STRIGIFORME IS FETCHABLE NOWABOUTS...
A NEW LADY! A NEW LADY AS ENVIRGINOMENTAL AS THE OLD ONE!
NUFF! SOUNDS LIKE AN INCOPROBULL DISLUSION TO ME.
THERE IS NO LADY, SAVE HER LONG SINCE ABANDONED TO THE LONELIEST ANIMALS OF ALL.
WE SEARCH AND ROOTLE 'MIDST THE NEBULAE, MERELY TO OCCUPY OUR TEDIOUS IMMORTALHOOD! WE...
WE...
UH..
HUMF.
I...
I AM OF A SUDDEN BECOME QUITE UNACCOUNTABLY LACHRYMOUS..
4
CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING

IT LOOKS LIKE HER IT SMELLS LIKE HER...
OF COURSE, IT CANNOT ACTUALLY BE HER, NOT IN THIS REGRETERNAL MISERIVERSE, BUT...
BUT...
PESTIMISTIC OLD SOURQUILL! AS CO-CREATURE AND SHIPBOSS, I COMMASK YOU TO SHUSH YOUR CYANICISMS!
LET'S HOP A SKIP AND SEE IF THERE'S LOGICAL ANIMALATIONS HEREBY...
WITH RELIGHTED DELUCTANCE, I FOLLOW.
PSSHH! LUCCA YONDERWARDS...
UH... HELLO, CUZLING.
IS THIS YOUR LADY WE'RE TREADLING ACROSS?
5

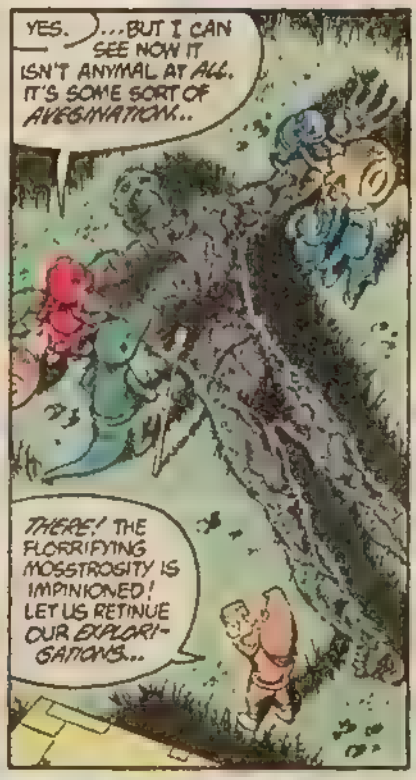

PERHAPS HE JUST FEELS UNPARTIAL TO PROVERBALIZING RIGHT NOW...
HMM. IT'S HARD TO CONFIGURE THE ANGLES ON A FAUREIGNA, ESPECIALLY WHEN HE'S INVERTICALLY INCLINED
OH, THEY'LL COME AROUNDWAYS AND SPLIT THE DIFFERACIAL. THEY JUST LIKE US, ONLY MORESO ANTISOCIABLE AND A MITE SMALLER...
.. WHICH IS PECURIOUS, CONSITUAT NO THAT THEIR LADY IS SO BIG.
B G ENOUGH FOR US TO REPOPULNATE AND RAISE OUR CELLULITERS?
ENOUGH, AND ENOUGHER STILL!
JUST WISH THE OTHERS HAD SURVAILED LONG ENOUGH TO WATCH THEIR TUBE-TYKES SPROGGING UP...
STILL, LEASTWISE OLD "FIND THE LADY" WON'T OBLIGED TO SING THE EXTINCT-SONYS NO MORE, NOW WE'RE HEREABOUTS...
THAT'S A MERCY AND A DELIVERATION. HE WAS STARTING TO UNMEMBER THE WORDS, AND...
WHUURP!
POG?
FORTUNATURALLY, I AM. I JUST SKITTLED OVER THIS HERE...
OVER THIS...
ARE YOU UNCONTUPED?
6

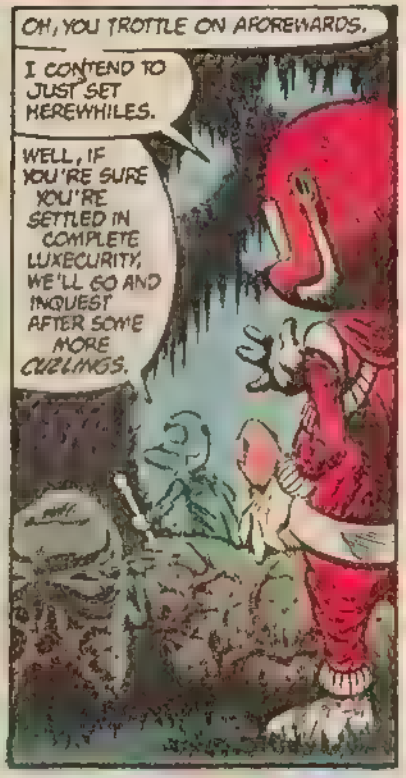
SWAMP THING
CREATED BY
LEN WEIN AND BERNI WRIGHTSON

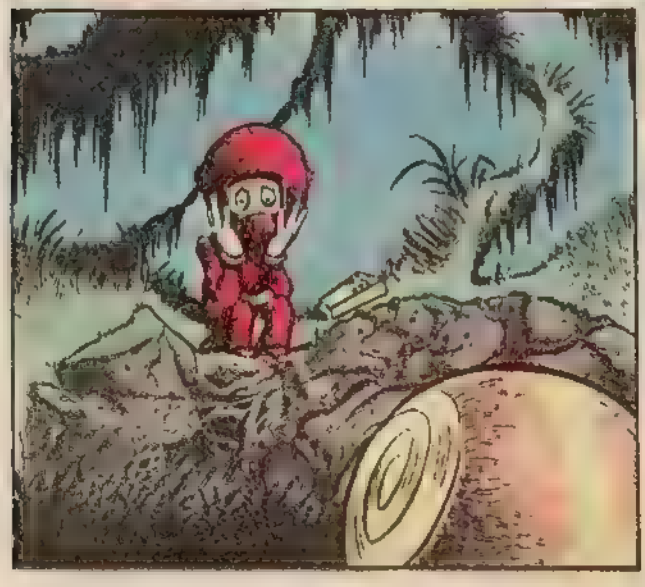
THAT UNTOLLIGIBLE GRUTTERING... CAN THAT BE A REAL LINGUISH?
WHO CARES? IT'S GOING TO SPLASTER US ALL OVER ITS SWOMPING GROUND!
GOOD BYE-AND-BYE, OLD POG...
EVERYBODY CLUTCH FOR THE CUMULATIONS AND REMAIN EMOTIONLESS!!
PRECARE FOR A DEMONSTRIFICATION, YOU SHUMBLING SCUMBOGGERY!
NO, STRIGIFORME! THAT SPOTGUN'S A RUSKERY GENTIQUE!
SEE?
WORKS SMOOTH AS A NEW-BOUGHT BABY-BEAKER'S BASE!

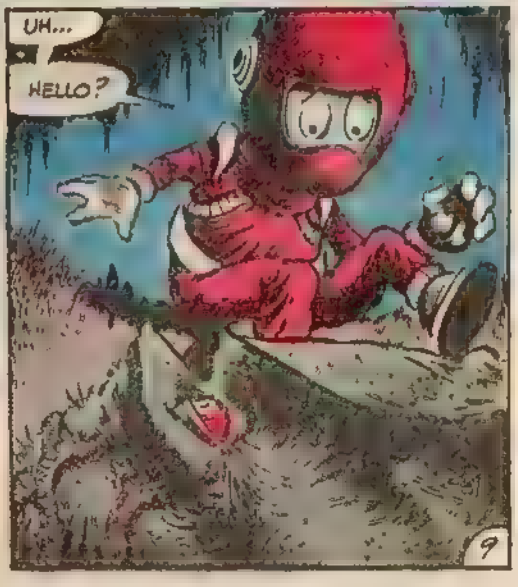

FETCH SOME ANIMANACLES, AND STAREFUL AS YOU GO! THERE'S PROSSIBLY MORE OF THESE MURSTERS LOUCHING HEREAROUND!
YOU UNDISTRAUGHTED YET, BOSS?

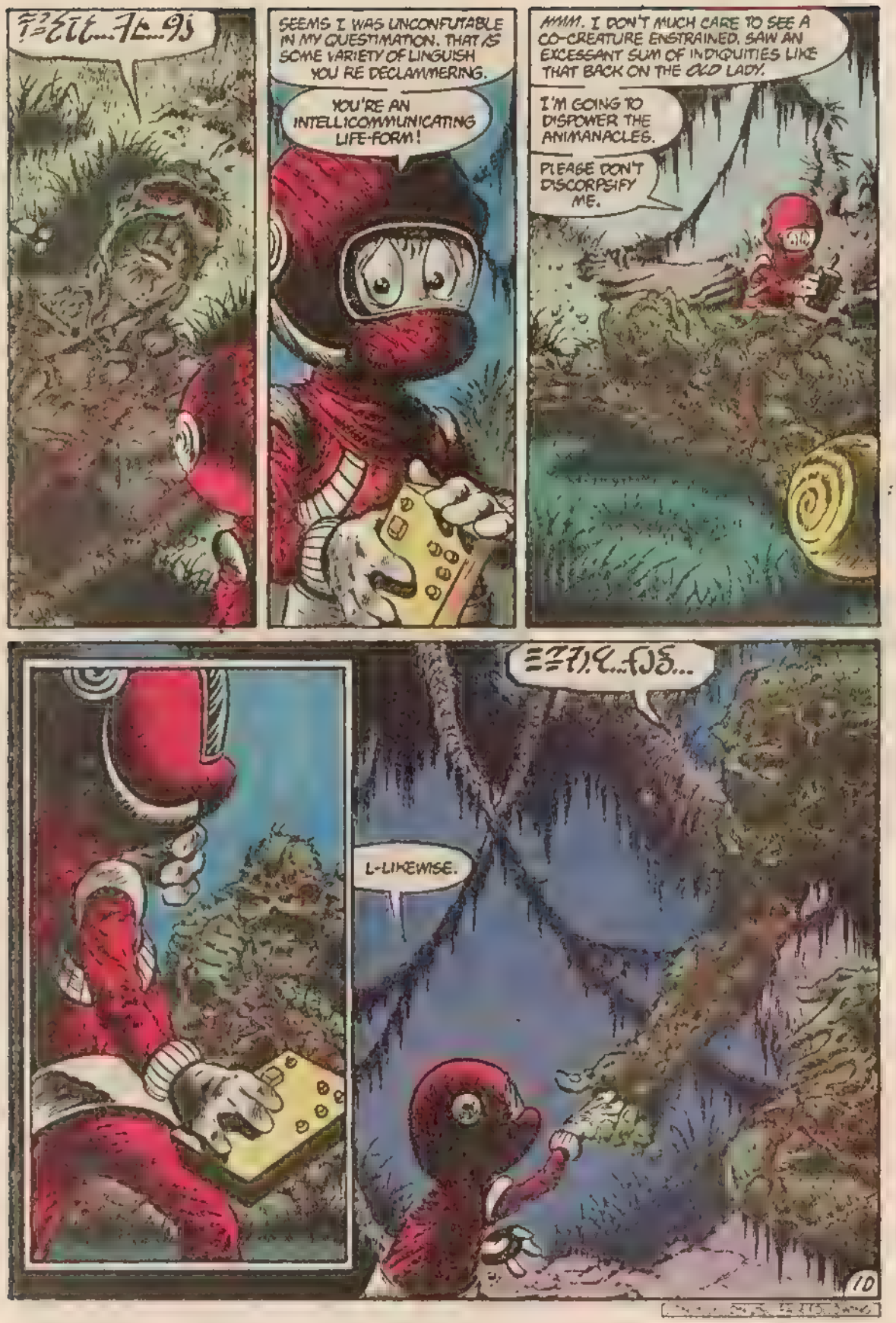
I'M... I'M WELL AS CAN BE INSPECTED, BARTLE...
IT'S JUST... WHEN I SAW THAT SHAPERITION, I THOUGHT... I THOUGHT IT WAS...
...THE LONELIEST ANIMAL OF ALL?


YES. ...BUT I CAN SEE NOW IT ISN'T ANYMAL AT ALL. IT'S SOME SORT OF AVESINATION...
THERE! THE FLORRIFYING MOSSTROSITY IS IMPRISONED! LET US RETINUE OUR EXPLORI-GATIONS...

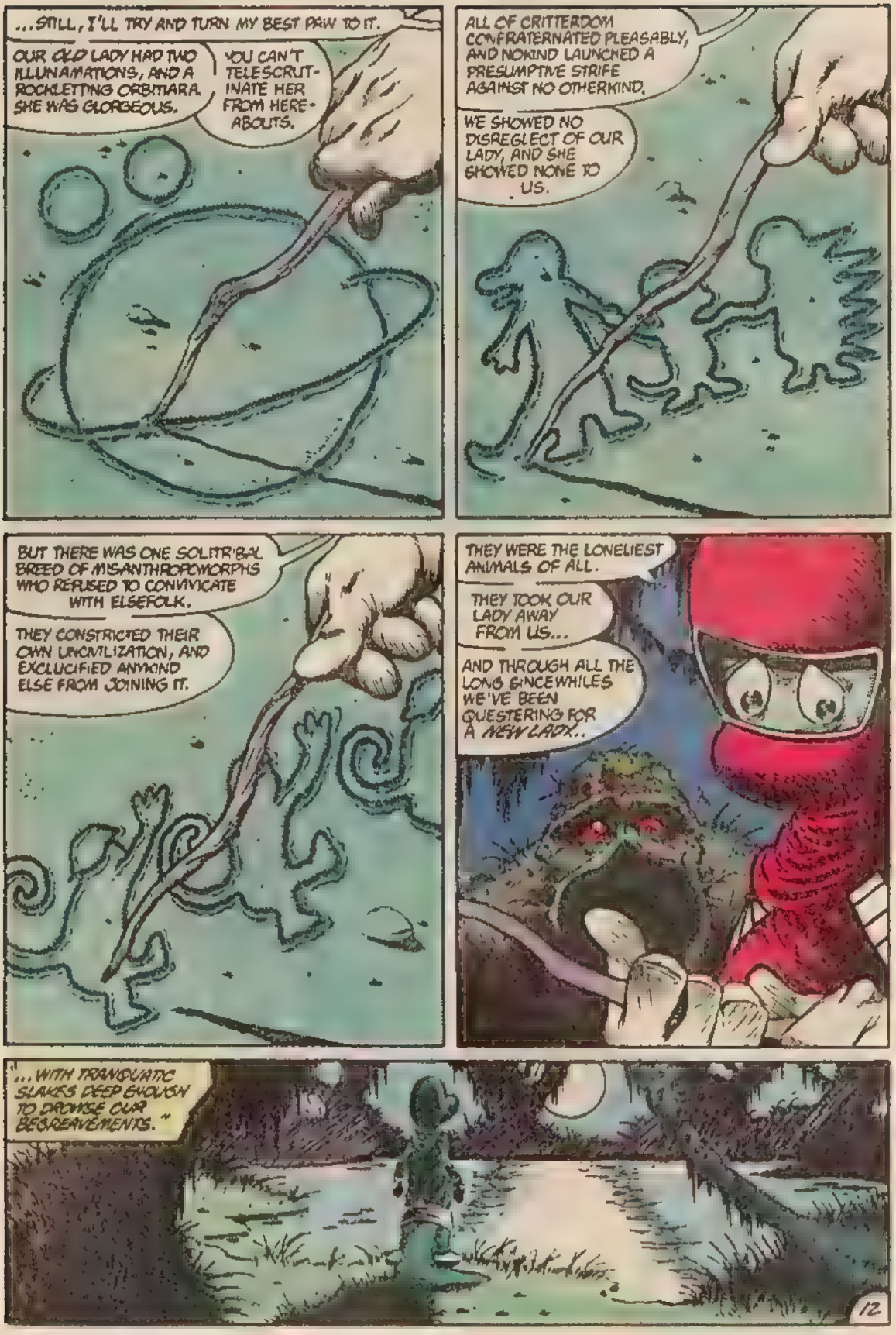

OH, YOU TROTTLE ON AFOREWARDS.
I CONTEND TO JUST SET HEREWHILES.
WELL, IF YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE SETTLED IN COMPLETE LUXECURITY, WE'LL GO AND INQUEST AFTER SOME MORE CUZLINGS.

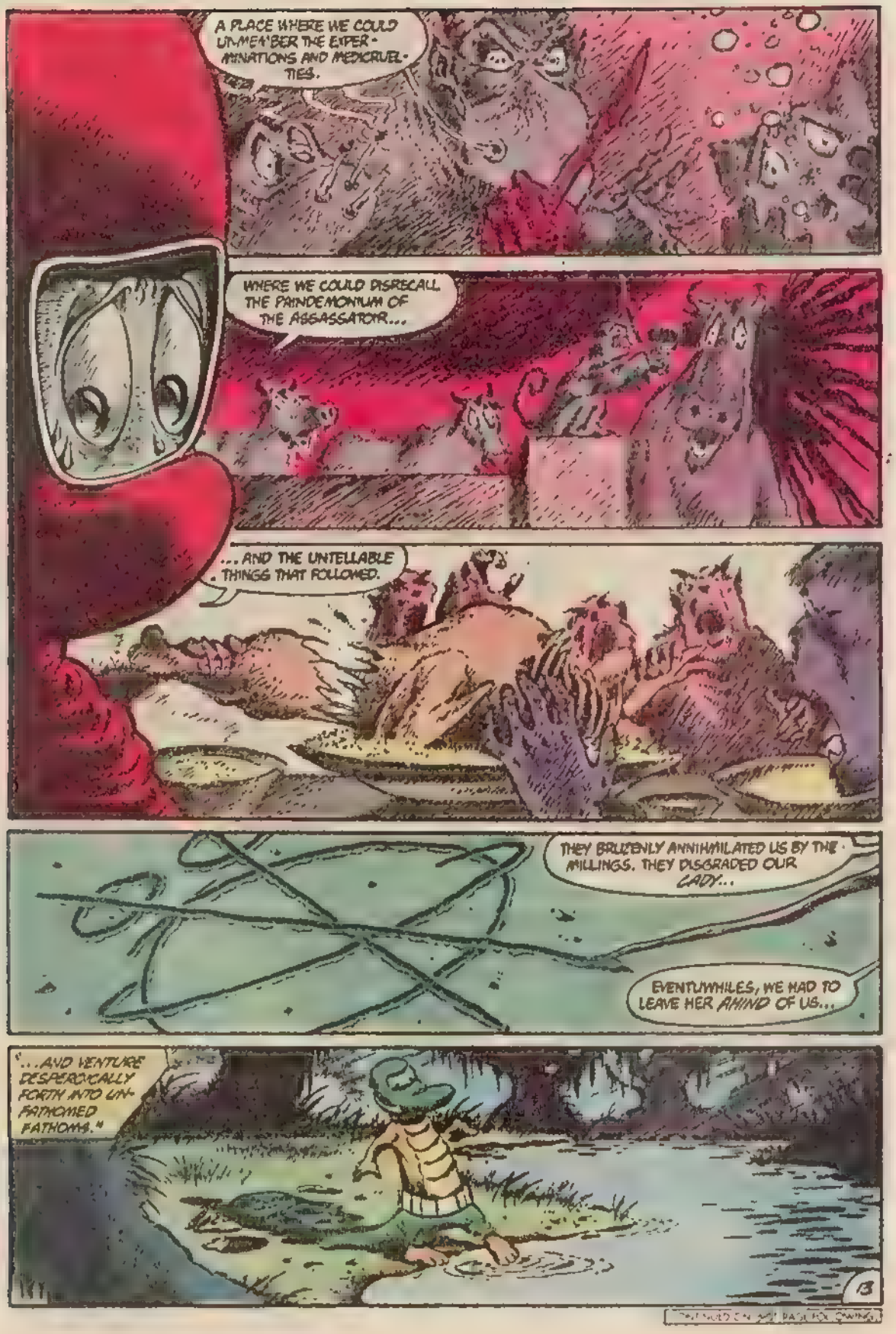


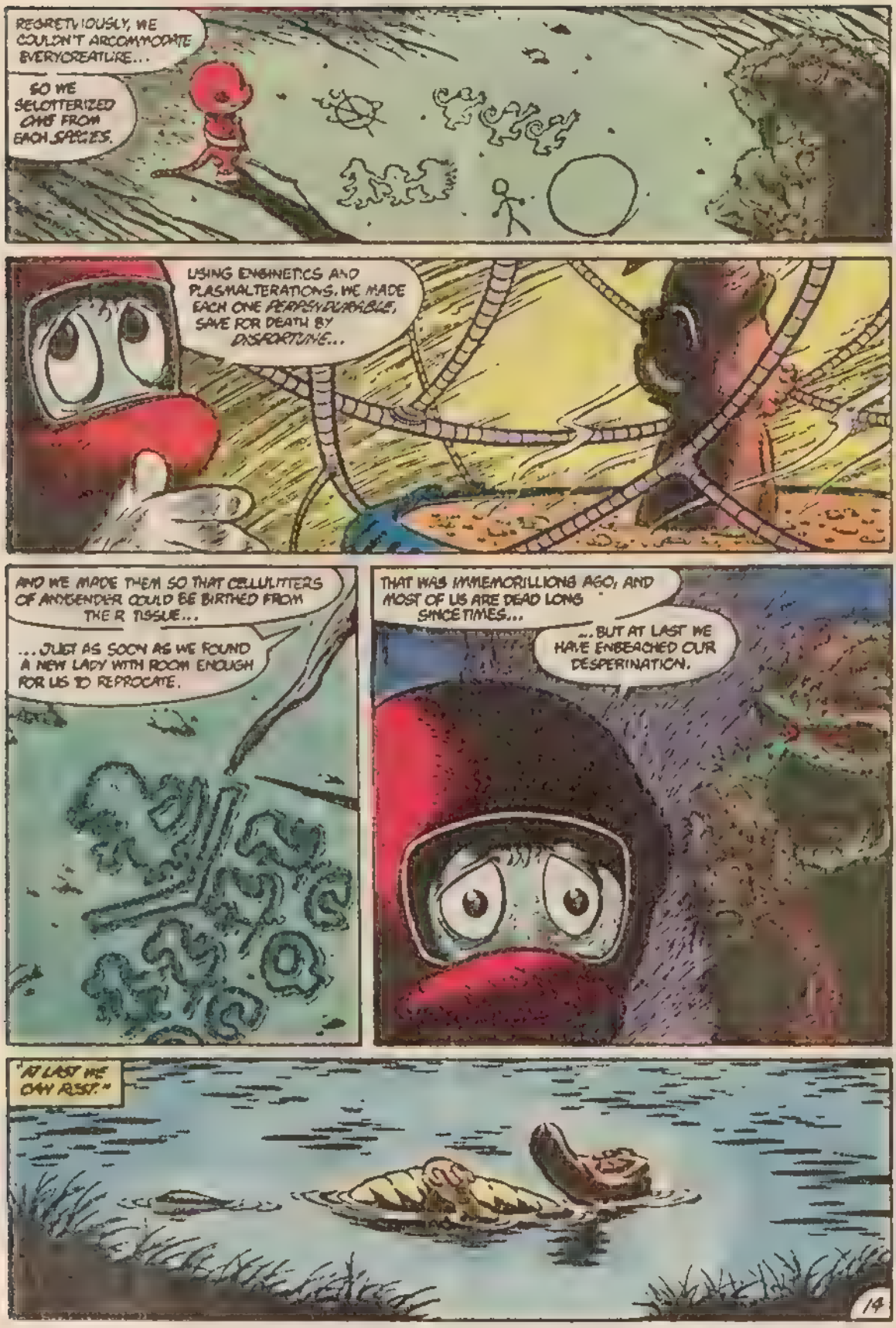

UH...
HELLO?


SEEMS I WAS UNCONFUTABLE IN MY QUESTIMATION. THAT IS SOME VARIETY OF LINGUISH YOU RE DECLAMMERING.
YOU'RE AN INTELLICOMMUNICATING LIFE-FORM!
AHHH. I DON'T MUCH CARE TO SEE A CO-CREATURE ENSTRAINED. SAW AN EXCESSANT SUM OF INDIQUITIES LIKE THAT BACK ON THE OLD LADY.
I'M GOING TO DISPOWER THE ANIMANACLES.
PLEASE DON'T DISCORPSIFY ME.
L-LIKEWISE.
10

I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T BE ANTAGRAVATED. YOU RE MADE OUT OF THE SAME INGREENIENTS AS THE LADY.
YOU MUST BE HER GUARDIAN, OR SOME SUCH
I CONFIGURE WE MUST HAVE STARTLIZED YOU AS MUCH AS REVICE-VERSIONAL. I WISH I COULD EXPLACATE, BUT I DON'T SQUEAK YOUR LINGU SH, SO
WHAT ARE YOU DROODLING?
FUS...EZE...
SPIKTURES AND ANIMAGLYPHS? YOU THINK WE COULD COMMUNIFY IN PICTOMIME?
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S HOW WE FIRST MANAGED INTER-SPEECHES CONVERGATION BACK ON THE OLD LADY, BUT...
...BUT I'M NOT ENTIRE RESURED I CAN RECONNECT HOW TO DO IT ANYMORE.
"YOU SEE WE'VE BEEN WANDERLOST FOR SO LONGS, AND WE'VE UNMEMBERED SO MUCH..."


...STILL, I'LL TRY AND TURN MY BEST PAW TO IT.
OUR OLD LADY HAD TWO ILLUNAMATIONS, AND A ROCKLETTING ORBITIARA. SHE WAS GLORGEOUS.
YOU CAN'T TELESCRUTINATE HER FROM HEREABOUTS.
ALL OF CRITTERDOM CONFRATERNATED PLEASABLY, AND NOKIND LAUNCHED A PRESUMPTIVE STRIFE AGAINST NO OTHERKIND.
WE SHOWED NO DISREGLECT OF OUR LADY, AND SHE SHOWED NONE TO US.
BUT THERE WAS ONE SOLITR'BAL BREED OF MISANTHROPOMORPHS WHO REFUSED TO CONVIVICATE WITH ELSEFOLK.
THEY CONSTRICTED THEIR OWN UNCIVILIZATION, AND EXCLUCIFIED ANYKIND ELSE FROM JOINING IT.
THEY WERE THE LONELIEST ANIMALS OF ALL.
THEY TOOK OUR LADY AWAY FROM US...
AND THROUGH ALL THE LONG SINCEWHILES WE'VE BEEN QUESTERING FOR A NEW LADY...
"...WITH TRANQUATIC SLAKES DEEP ENOUGH TO DROWSE OUR BESREAVEMENTS."
12


A PLACE WHERE WE COULD UN-MEA'BER THE EXPER-MINATIONS AND MEDICRUEL-TIES.
WHERE WE COULD DISRECALL THE PAINDEMONIUM OF THE ASSASSATOIR...
...AND THE UNTELLABLE THINGS THAT FOLLOWED.
THEY BRUTENLY ANNIHMILATED US BY THE MILLINGS. THEY DISGRADED OUR LADY...
EVENTUWHILES, WE HAD TO LEAVE HER AHIND OF US...
"...AND VENTURE DESPERATELY FORTH INTO UN-FATHOMED FATHOMS."
13


REGRETFULLY, WE COULDN'T ACCOMMODATE EVERYCREATURE...
SO WE SELECTERIZED ONE FROM EACH SPECIES.
USING ENGINEERICS AND PLASMALTERATIONS, WE MADE EACH ONE PERPSEVERABLE, SAVE FOR DEATH BY DISFORTUNE...
AND WE MADE THEM SO THAT CELLULITTERS OF ANYGENDER COULD BE BIRTHED FROM THEIR TISSUE...
...JUST AS SOON AS WE FOUND A NEW LADY WITH ROOM ENOUGH FOR US TO REPROCATE.
THAT WAS IMMEMORILLIONS AGO, AND MOST OF US ARE DEAD LONG SINCE TIMES...
...BUT AT LAST WE HAVE ENBEACHED OUR DESPERINATION.
"AT LAST WE CAN REST."
14

...AND SO THAT'S...HMM?
WHY DID YOU UNSET YOURSELF?
ARE YOU GOING TO DEPASTURE FOR ELSEABOUTS, OR...?
YOU...WANT ME TO ESCOMPANY YOU?
YOU WANT TO DISVEIL SOMETHING TO ME?
WELL, ASSERTAINLY...
...BUT WE MUSTN'T BE UNHASTEFUL, OR MY KINLINGS WILL INFERE THAT YOU'VE UNSCAPED AND DISCORPS FIED ME.
BATON ROUGE 1¾ MILES
RICHIE'S FARM
!
15

IS IT MUCH DISTANTER?
I'M A TARDLING COMPRIZED WITH YOU, AND NOT SO STRIDEFUL...
OH NO. NOT HERE AS WELL.
THEY CAN'T OWN THIS LADY, TOO!
"WE WERE GOING TO BE HAPPY HERE."
DISPARANT CUZLINGS! LONG-LAST BROODLINGS! LET ME EMGRACE YOU!
16

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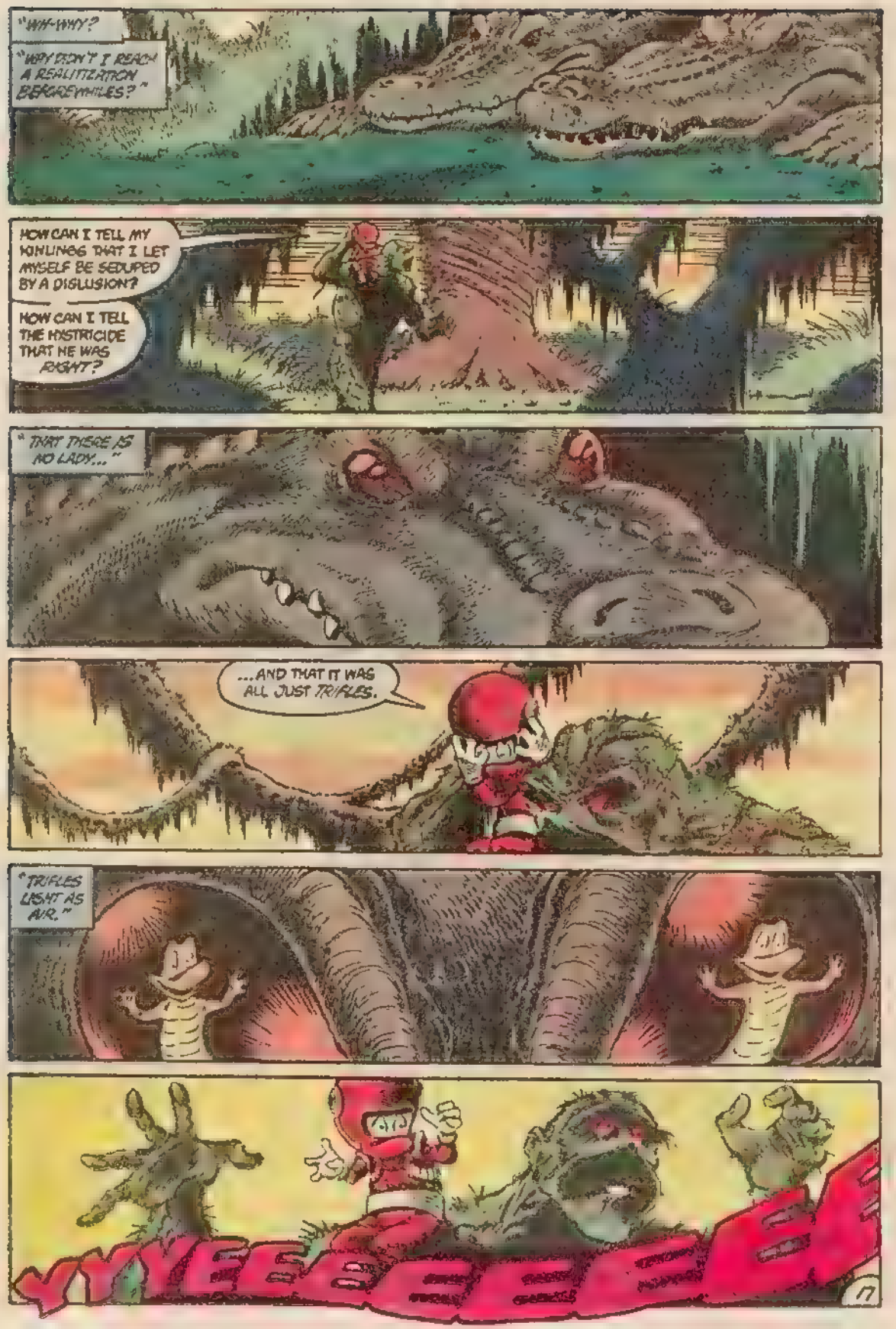
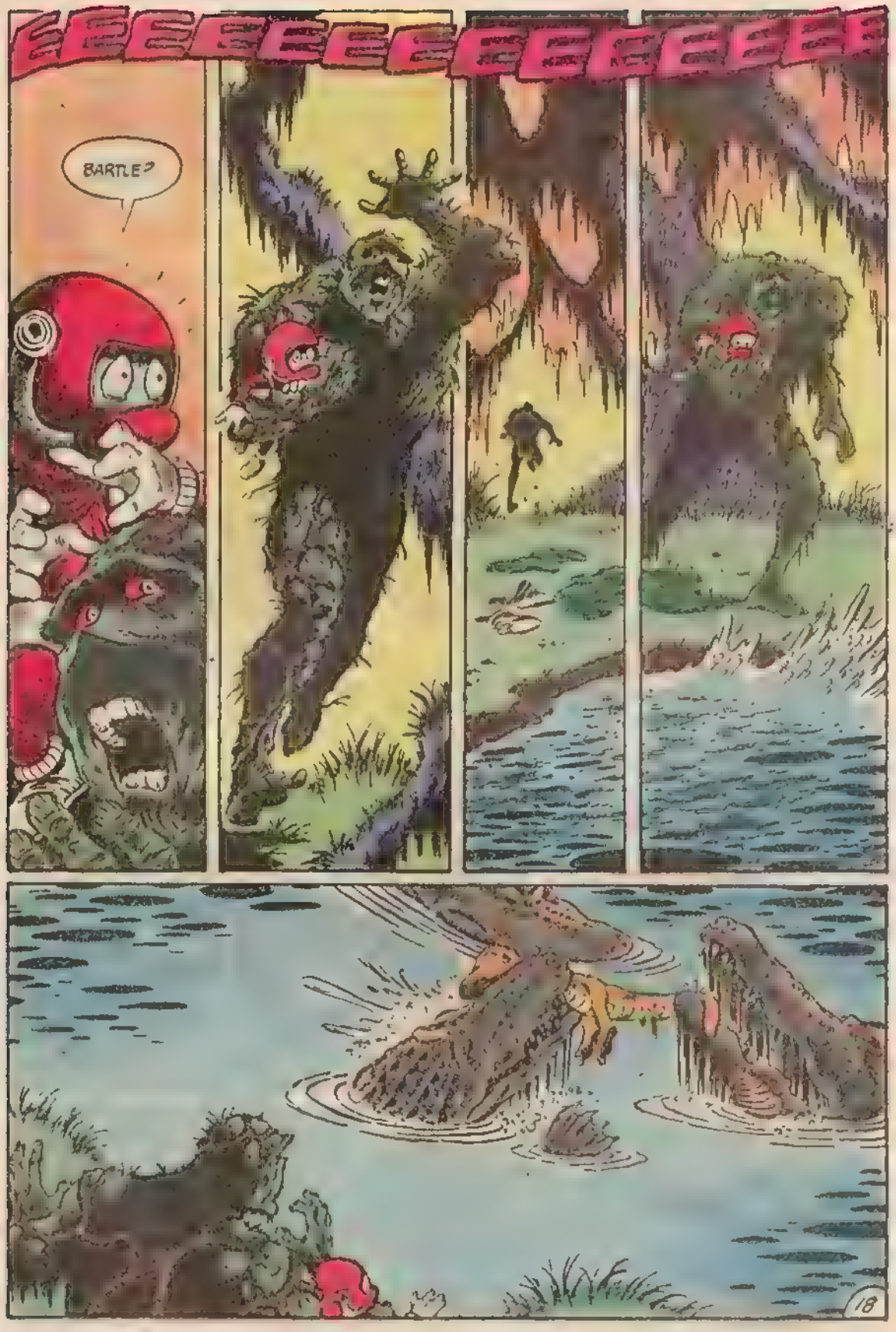

"WH-WHY?
"WHY DIDN'T I REACH A REALITIZATION BEFORE WHALES?"
HOW CAN I TELL MY KINLINGS THAT I LET MYSELF BE SEDUPED BY A DISLUSION?
HOW CAN I TELL THE HISTRICIDE THAT HE WAS RIGHT?
"THAT THERE IS NO LADY..."
...AND THAT IT WAS ALL JUST TRIFLES.
"TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR."
YYYEEEEEEE
17


EEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
BARTLE?

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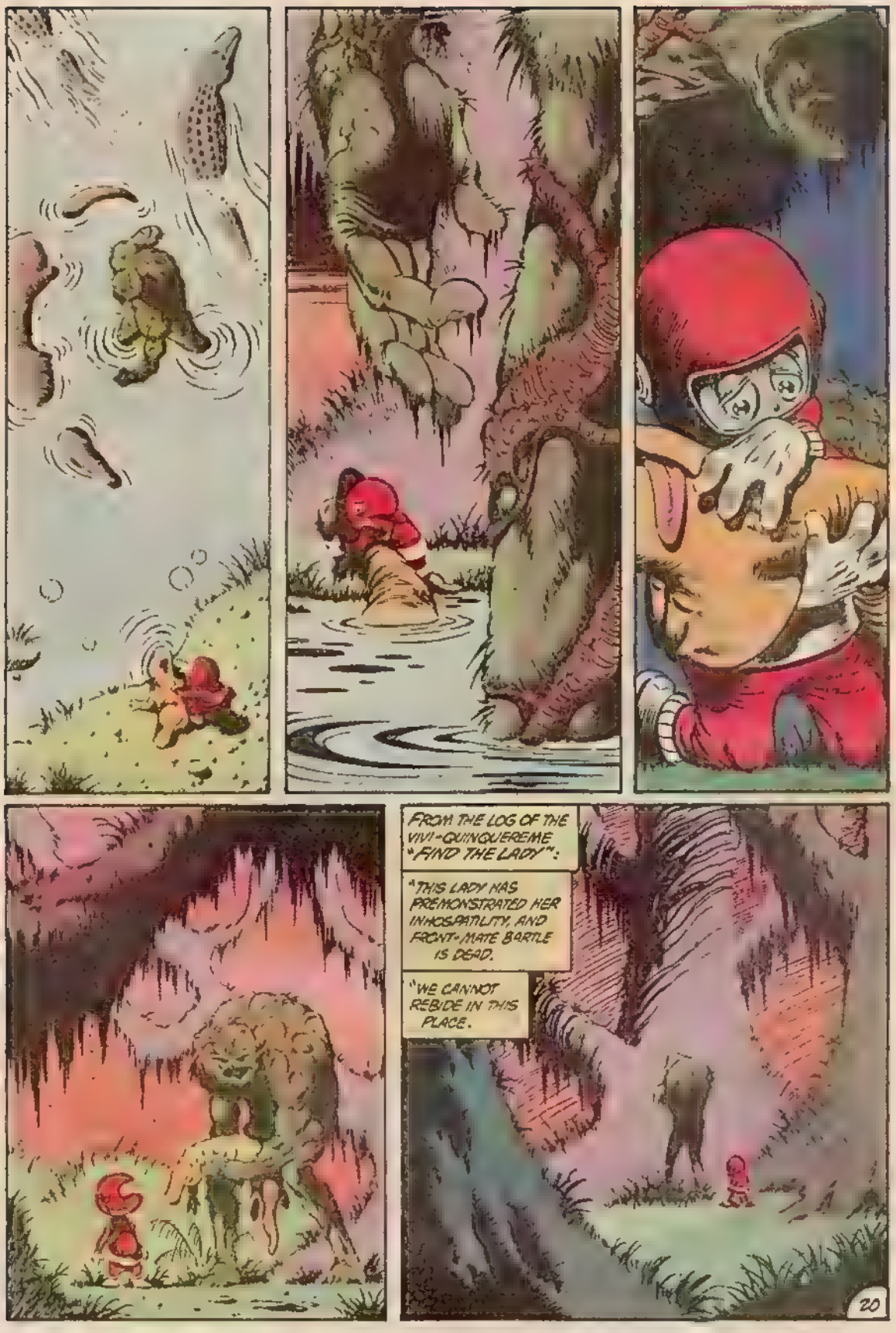
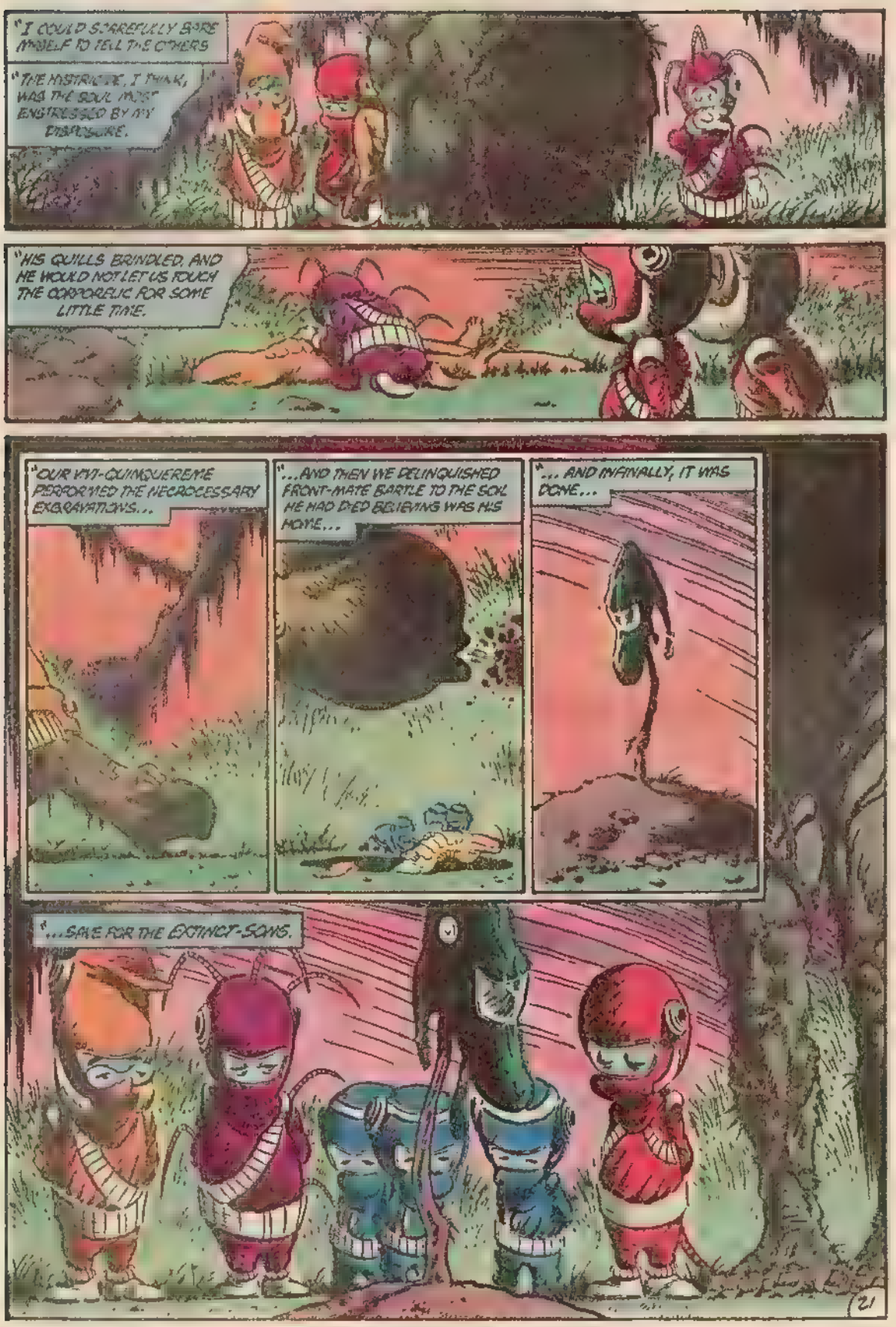
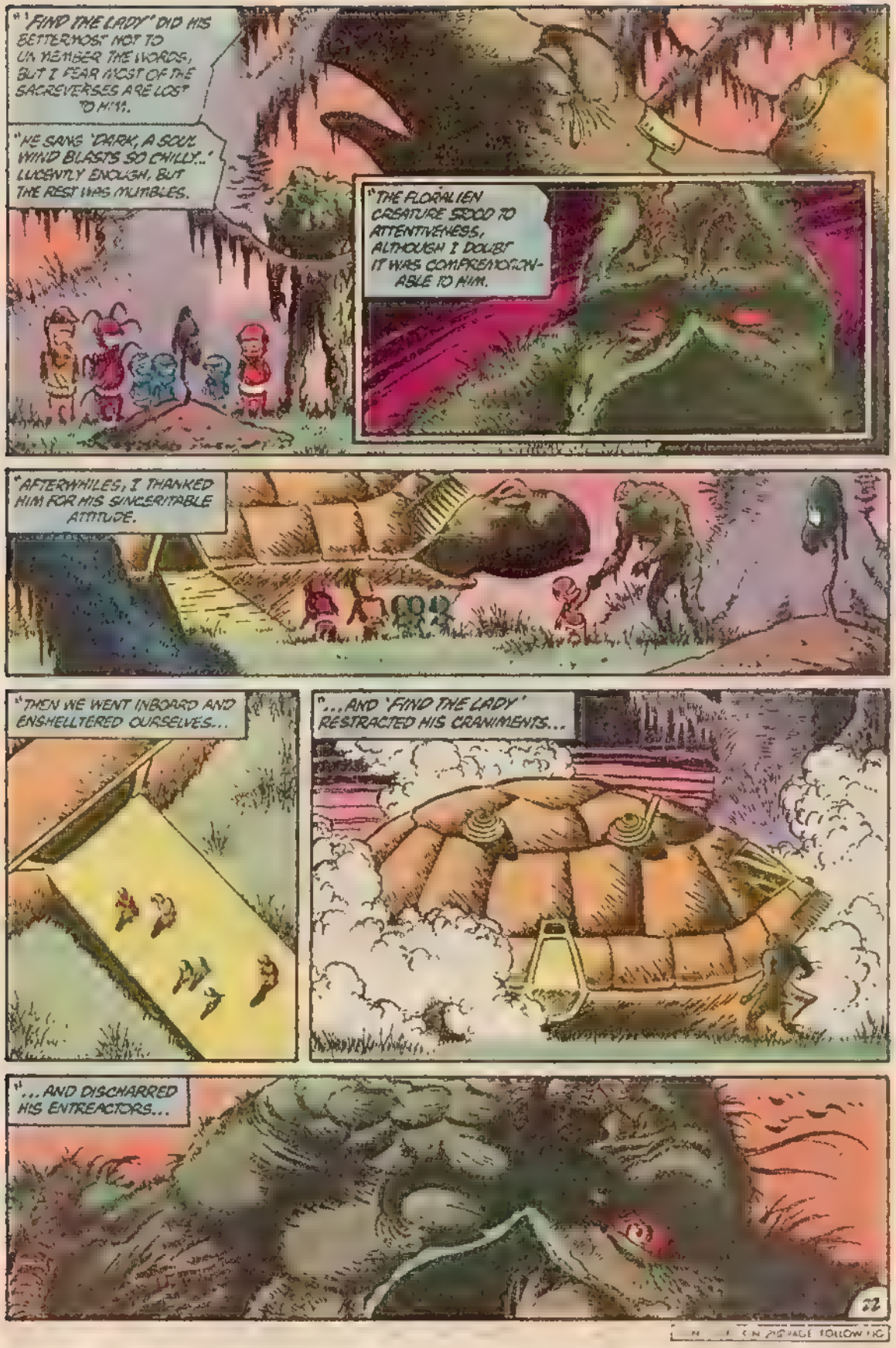
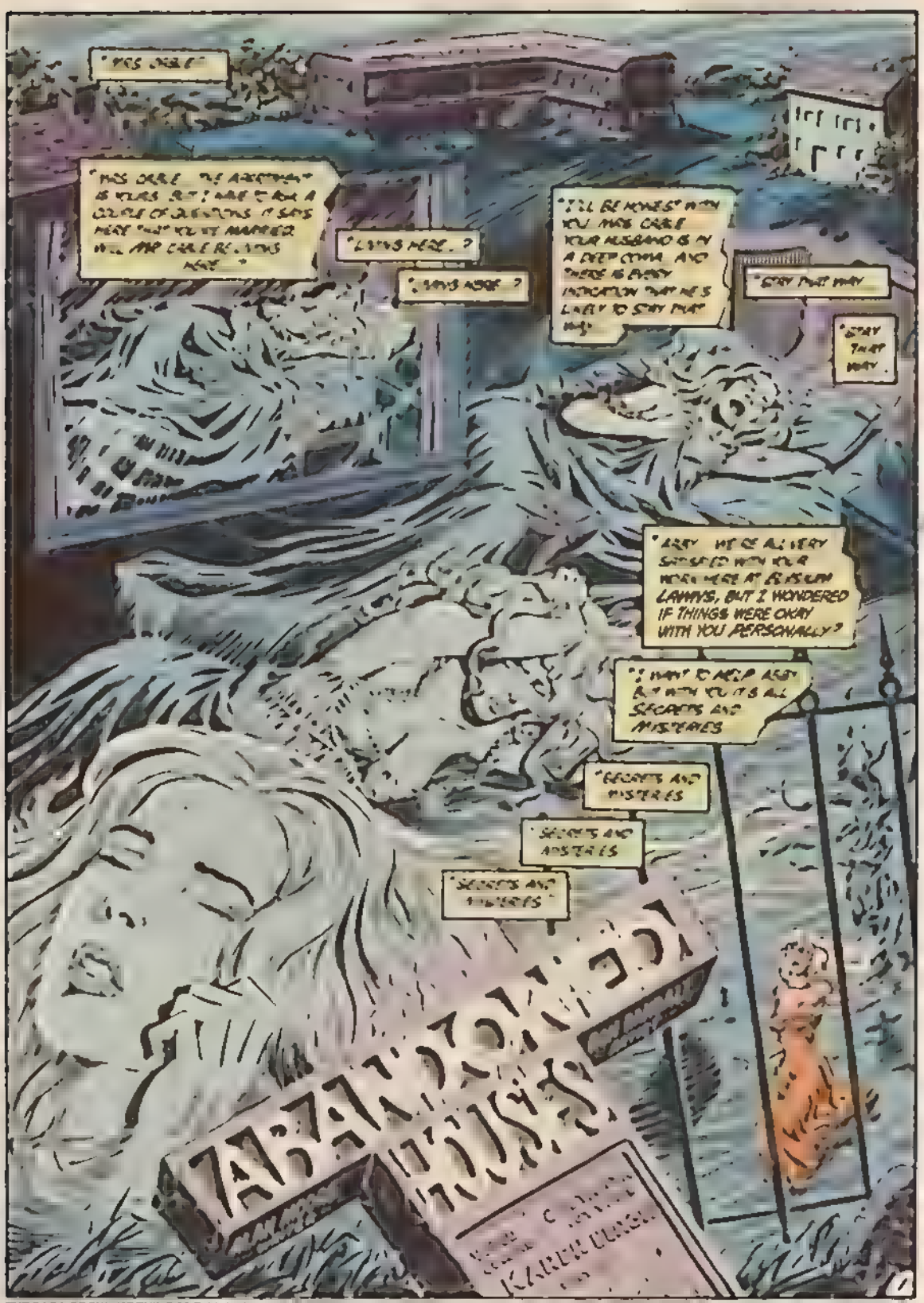

FROM THE LOG OF THE VIVI-QUINQUEREME "FIND THE LADY":
"THIS LADY HAS PREMONSTRATED HER INHOSPATILITY, AND FRONT-MATE BARTLE IS DEAD.
"WE CANNOT REBIDE IN THIS PLACE.


"I COULD SCARCELY BARE MYSELF TO TELL THE OTHERS
"THE HISTRIONICS, I THINK, WAS THE SOUL MOST ENSTRESSED BY MY DISCLOSURE.
"HIS QUILLS BRINDLED, AND HE WOULD NOT LET US TOUCH THE CORPOREUS FOR SOME LITTLE TIME.
"OUR VVI-QUINQUEREME PERFORMED THE NECROCESSARY EXCAVATIONS...
"...AND THEN WE RELINQUISHED FRONT-MATE BARTLE TO THE SOIL HE HAD DIED BELIEVING WAS HIS HOME...
"... AND INFINALLY, IT WAS DONE...
"...SAVE FOR THE EXTINCT-SONS.
21


"'FIND THE LADY' DID HIS BETTERMOST NOT TO UN MEMBER THE WORDS, BUT I FEAR MOST OF THE SACREVERSES ARE LOST TO HIM.
"HE SANG 'DARK, A SOUL WIND BLASTS SO CHILLY..' LUCENTLY ENOUGH, BUT THE REST WAS MUMBLES.
"THE FLORALIEN CREATURE SEEMED TO ATTENTIVENESS, ALTHOUGH I DOUBT IT WAS COMPREHENSION-ABLE TO HIM.
"AFTERWHILES, I THANKED HIM FOR HIS SINCERITABLE ATTITUDE.
"THEN WE WENT INBOARD AND ENSHELTERED OURSELVES...
"...AND 'FIND THE LADY' RESTRACTED HIS CRANIMENTS...
"...AND DISCHARRED HIS ENTREACTORS...
22

"... AND WE CONTINUED ON OUR WAY"
--POG (SHIPBOSS) FE BAR! A O!
NEXT:
RITE OF SPRING

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
SWAMP THING
33
75¢
CAN 95¢
U K 30p
FEB 85
WHERE LEGENDS LIVE!


"YES DEAR?"
"I'LL BE HOME SOON WITH YOU MRS CABLE YOUR HUSBAND IS IN A DEEP COMA AND THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT HE'S LIKELY TO STAY THAT WAY."
"STAY THAT WAY."
"STAY THAT WAY."
"ALEC WE'RE ALL VERY SATISFIED WITH YOUR WORK HERE AT ELYSIAN LAWNS, BUT I WONDERED IF THINGS WERE OKAY WITH YOU PERSONALLY?"
"I WANT TO HELP ALEC BUT WITH YOU IT'S ALL SECRETS AND MYSTERIES"
"SECRETS AND MYSTERIES"
"SECRETS AND MYSTERIES"
"SECRETS AND MYSTERIES"

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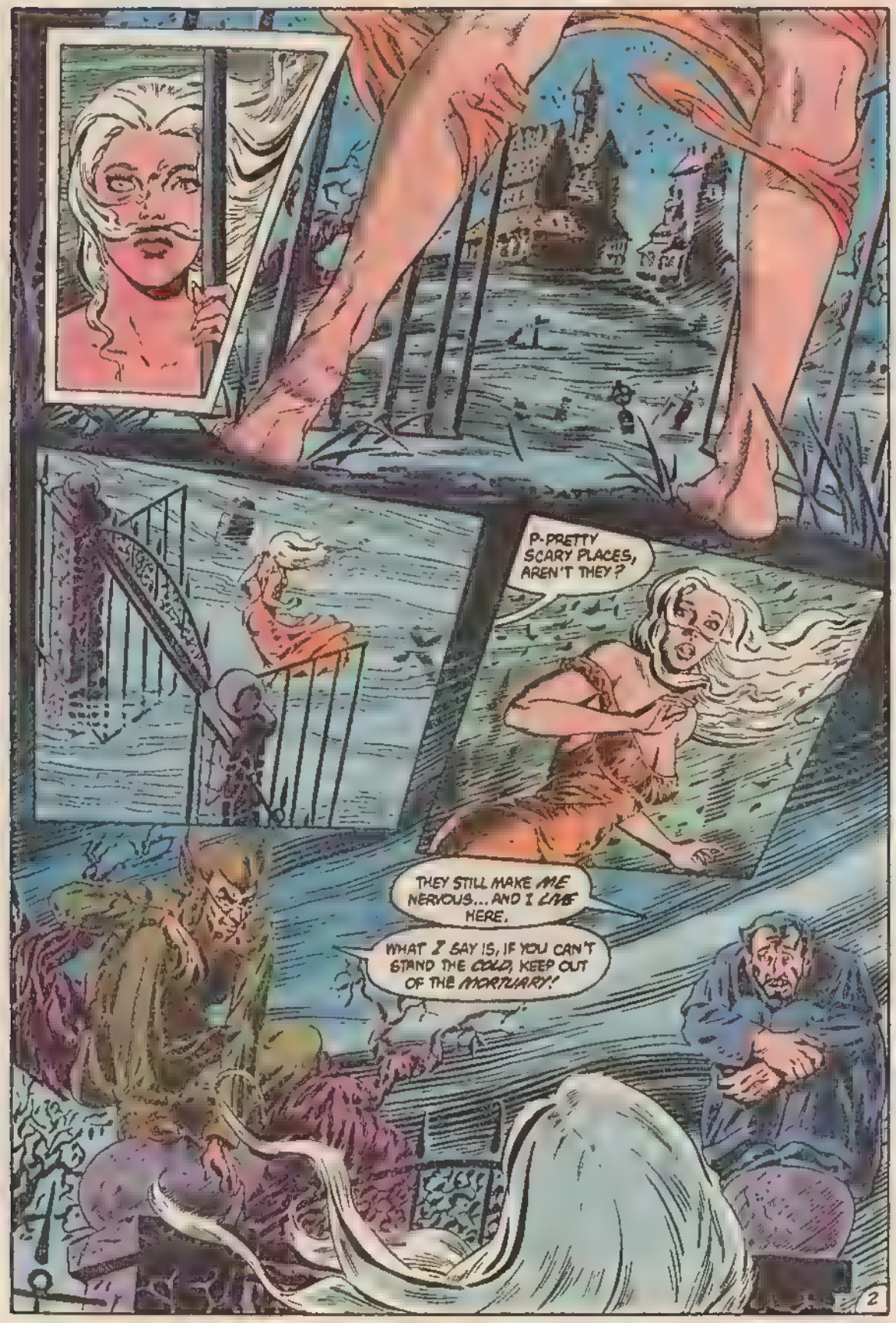
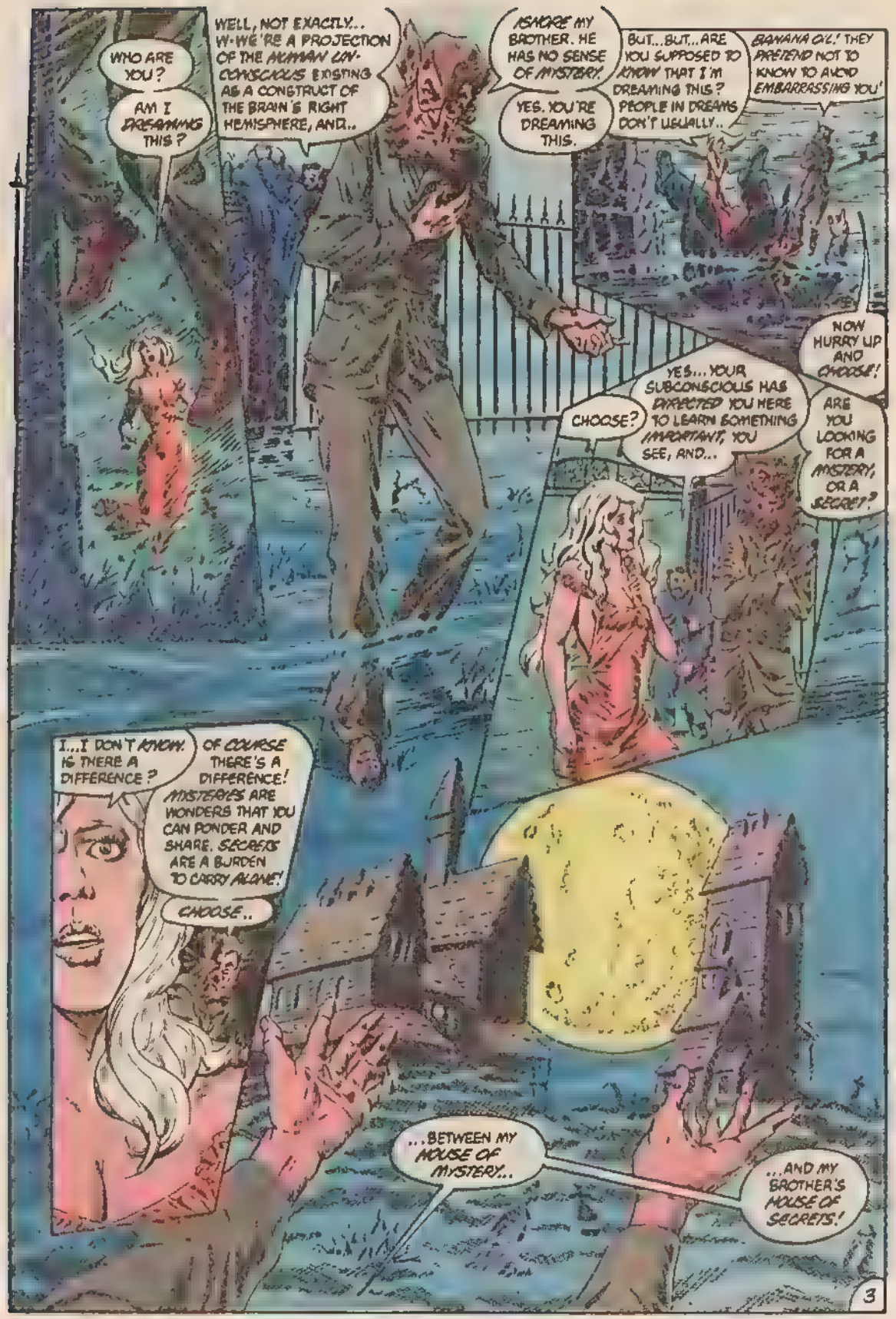
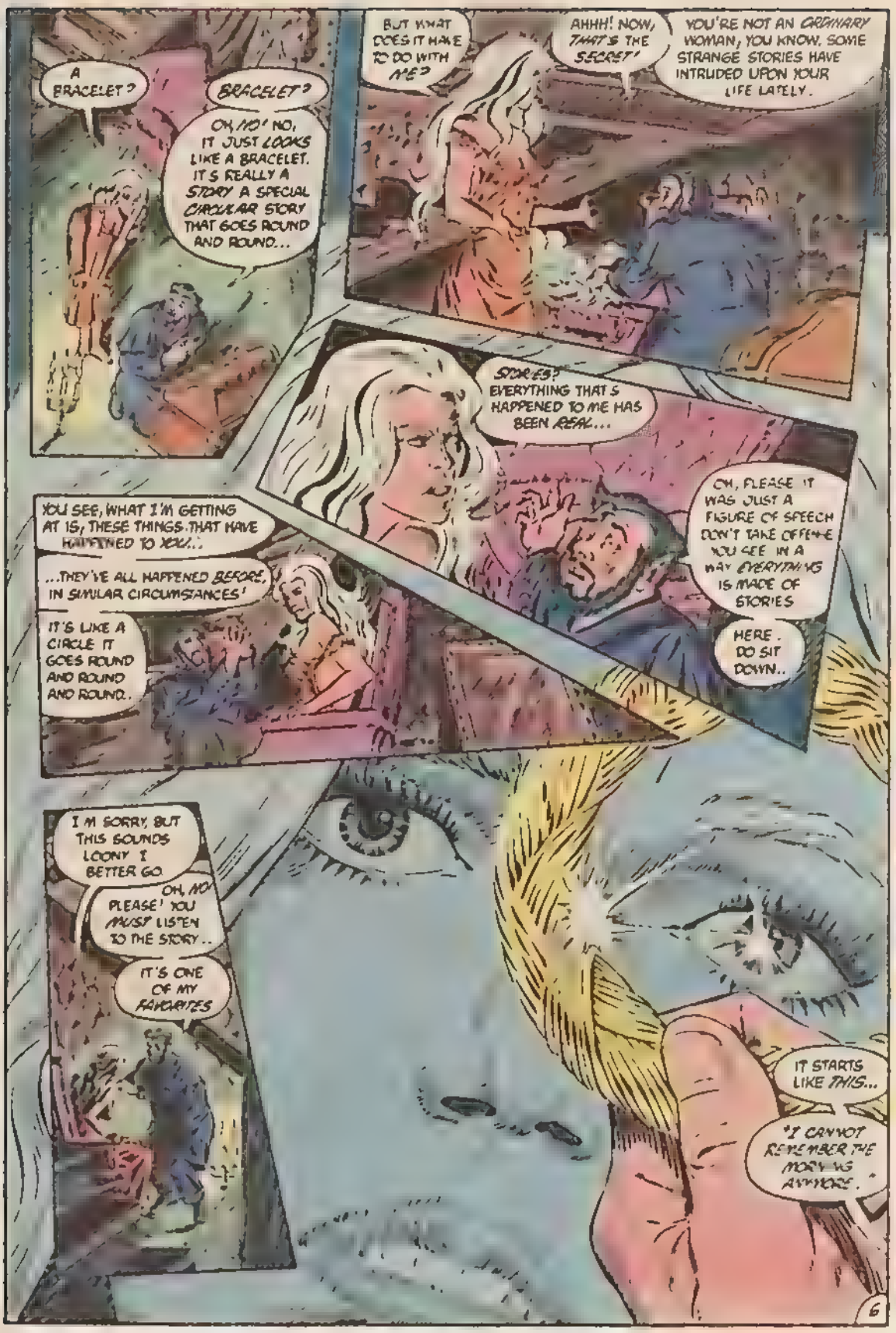
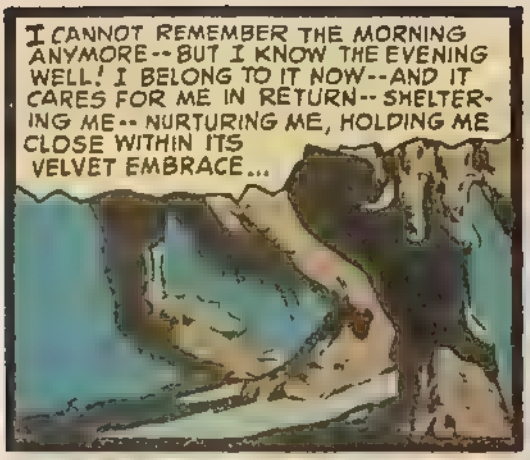

P-PRETTY SCARY PLACES, AREN'T THEY?
THEY STILL MAKE ME NERVOUS... AND I LIVE HERE.
WHAT I SAY IS, IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE COLD, KEEP OUT OF THE MORTUARY!

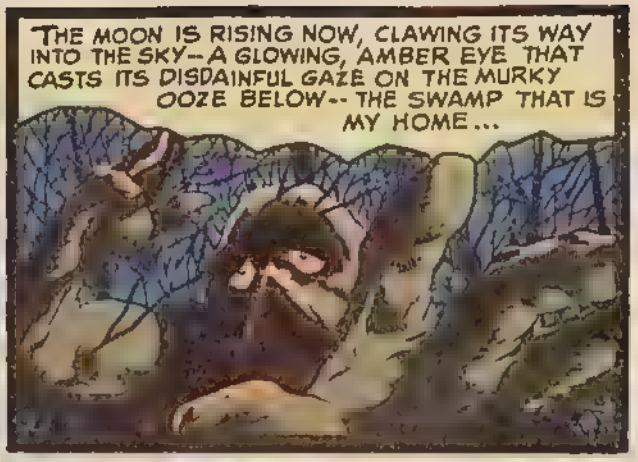

WELL, NOT EXACTLY... W-WE'RE A PROJECTION OF THE HUMAN UN-CONSCIOUS EXISTING AS A CONSTRUCT OF THE BRAIN'S RIGHT HEMISPHERE, AND..
WHO ARE YOU?
AM I DREAMING THIS?
ASHORE MY BROTHER. HE HAS NO SENSE OF MYSTERY.
YES. YOU'RE DREAMING THIS.
BUT...BUT...ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO KNOW THAT I'M DREAMING THIS? PEOPLE IN DREAMS DON'T USUALLY..
BANANA OIL! THEY PRETEND NOT TO KNOW TO AVOID EMBARRASSING YOU!
NOW HURRY UP AND CHOOSE!
CHOOSE?
YES... YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS HAS DIRECTED YOU HERE TO LEARN SOMETHING IMPORTANT, YOU SEE, AND...
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A MYSTERY, OR A SECRET?
I...I DON'T KNOW. IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?
OF COURSE THERE'S A DIFFERENCE! MYSTERIES ARE WONDERS THAT YOU CAN PONDER AND SHARE. SECRETS ARE A BURDEN TO CARRY ALONE!
CHOOSE..
...BETWEEN MY HOUSE OF MYSTERY...
...AND MY BROTHER'S HOUSE OF SECRETS!

WELL ..
IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, I THINK I'D PREFER A GUIDED TOUR FROM YOUR BROTHER.
NOTHING PERSONAL
YOUR LOSS, MY DEAR
IS THAT ALL RIGHT? I MEAN YOU WON'T BE ANGRY WILL YOU IF YOU BE SURE THAT YOU DON'T MIND ME ESCORTING HER
MAD? WHY SHOULD I MIND?
AM I YOUR KEEPER?
YOUR BROTHER SEEMS PRETTY AGGRESSIVE DOESN'T HE GET ON YOUR NERVES?
WELL HE'S NOT SO BAD HE JUST GETS JEALOUS WHEN PEOPLE LIKE ME BETTER THAN HIM, I SUPPOSE
BUT YOU'RE RIGHT
SOMETIMES HE CAN BE MURDER
THROUGH HERE
CONTINUED ON PAGE 52

IT'S VERY STRANGE AND CLUTTERED
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.. THIS IS THE PART OF THE UNCONSCIOUS WHERE ALL THE STORIES ARE BORN AND KEPT.
THERE ARE TOO MANY TO KEEP TIDY, ALTHOUGH GOD KNOWS I TRY...
OVER THERE'S A STORY ABOUT AN OLD WOMAN WHO KEPT THE OCEAN IN A BOTTLE
DOWN HERE'S THE TALE OF AN ORCHARD THAT BORE SKULLS INSTEAD OF FRUIT ALL TRUE, YOU KNOW..
THIS WAY...
LISTEN, ARE YOU SURE I'M GOING TO LEARN SOMETHING IMPORTANT FROM ALL THIS...?
OH, YES! MOST CERTAINLY! I'VE GOT A VERY SPECIAL SECRET BACK HERE SOMEPLACE THAT'S JUST FOR YOU!
NOW, WHERE DID I...
AHH! HERE IT IS!
THERE'S A LOT OF DUST...
HMMM. WELL, THINGS HAVE BEEN QUIET AROUND HERE THESE LAST FEW YEARS. PEOPLE DON'T DROP BY SO MUCH. I THINK THAT'S WHAT ANNOYS MY BROTHER. BEING NEGLECTED..
DOWN HERE...
5


A BRACELET?
BRACELET?
OH, NO! NO, IT JUST LOOKS LIKE A BRACELET. IT'S REALLY A STORY A SPECIAL CIRCULAR STORY THAT GOES ROUND AND ROUND...
BUT WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?
AHHH! NOW, THAT'S THE SECRET!
YOU'RE NOT AN ORDINARY WOMAN, YOU KNOW. SOME STRANGE STORIES HAVE INTRUDED UPON YOUR LIFE LATELY.
STORIES? EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME HAS BEEN REAL...
OH, PLEASE IT WAS JUST A FIGURE OF SPEECH DON'T TAKE OFFENCE YOU SEE IN A WAY EVERYTHING IS MADE OF STORIES
HERE. DO SIT DOWN..
YOU SEE, WHAT I'M GETTING AT IS, THESE THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU...
...THEY'VE ALL HAPPENED BEFORE, IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES!
IT'S LIKE A CIRCLE IT GOES ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND..
I'M SORRY, BUT THIS SOUNDS LOONY I BETTER GO
OH, NO! PLEASE! YOU MUST LISTEN TO THE STORY..
IT'S ONE OF MY FAVOURITES
IT STARTS LIKE THIS...
"I CANNOT REMEMBER THE MORNING ANYMORE."


I CANNOT REMEMBER THE MORNING ANYMORE -- BUT I KNOW THE EVENING WELL! I BELONG TO IT NOW -- AND IT CARES FOR ME IN RETURN -- SHELTERING ME -- NURTURING ME, HOLDING ME CLOSE WITHIN ITS VELVET EMBRACE...


THE MOON IS RISING NOW, CLAWING ITS WAY INTO THE SKY -- A GLOWING, AMBER EYE THAT CASTS ITS DISDAINFUL GAZE ON THE MURKY OOZE BELOW -- THE SWAMP THAT IS MY HOME...

I MOVE SLOWLY THROUGH THE MOSS-DRAPED MIRE -- TREADING A PATH THAT IS WORN SMOOTH FROM MY CONSTANT PASSING -- ON BEYOND THE SHADOWS AND THE DARK TREES' TWISTING TENDRILS TO MY INEVITABLE DESTINATION...

THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP -- AND THE MIST-WET OLD MANSION THAT RISES LIKE AN AGING APPARITION INTO A COLD EXPANSE OF SKY -- A STATELY SANCTUARY FULL OF BRIGHT LIGHTS AND PROMISES -- AND MEMORIES THAT BRING ONLY PAIN...

STORY: LEN WEIN
ART: BERNI WRIGHTSON

SWAMP THING

I HAVE STOOD WATCHING THAT OLD GRAY EDIFICE FOR MORE LONELY NIGHTS THAN I WANT TO RECALL--DREAMING ENDLESSLY OF THE SOFT GOLDEN LADY WHO LIVES WITHIN--KNOWING I CAN NEVER HAVE HER--WONDERING WHAT SHE'S DOING NOW...
YOU SMILE BECAUSE HE EXPECTS YOU TO--BUT IN THE SHADOWED CORRIDORS OF YOUR HEART THERE IS NO REAL JOY--THERE NEVER CAN BE...
A TOAST, MY DARLING--TO US! TODAY IS SIX MONTHS SINCE WE WERE WED!
YOUR NAME IS LINDA OLSEN RIDGE--AND YOUR MIND IS A RAGING RIVER THIS NIGHT--CARRYING YOUR THOUGHTS ALONG A SURGING STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS--SENDING MEMORIES CRASHING LIKE WAVES UPON SOME DISTANT SHORE...
YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT ALEX AGAIN, AREN'T YOU, DARLING? I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES!
I'M SORRY, DAMIAN--IT'S JUST THAT HE'S STILL SO REAL TO ME!
LINDA, ALEX OLSEN IS DEAD--AND YOU ARE MY WIFE NOW! EVENTUALLY, YOU WILL HAVE TO REALIZE THAT FACT! ALEX IS GONE, DARLING--THERE IS NOTHING TO DO BUT FORGET HIM!
NEVER--FOR TO FORGET ALEX OLSEN IS TO DENY A PART OF YOURSELF--A GOOD PART--FILLED WITH HAPPY SUMMER DAYS AND STAR-DAPPLED NIGHTS MIST COVERS YOUR EYES--AND MEMORIES FALL WITH THE TEARS...
8
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

WHAT IS A MEMORY? IT IS RIBBONS... CANDLES... A PARTY! YOU HAVE BEEN ALEX'S WIFE FOR TWELVE SHORT MONTHS... IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY...
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO MY TWO DEAREST FRIENDS! I REALLY ENVY YOU, ALEX! YOU GOT YOURSELF QUITE A PRIZE IN LINDA!
AND DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW IT!
WHAT IS A MEMORY? IT IS THE FEELING OF PRIDE YOU HAVE BEING MARRIED TO A FAST-RISING YOUNG SCIENTIST WITH THE WORLD AT HIS DOORSTEP...
AN ANNIVERSARY GIFT, DARLING--FOR YOU! A SYMBOL OF MY FEELING FOR YOU!
A GOLDEN BRACELET! LINDA, I...I'LL NEVER TAKE IT OFF AS LONG AS I LIVE! I PROMISE YOU THAT!
WE MAKE A FINE TEAM, DAMIAN--I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'D BE WITHOUT YOUR HELP!
IF THIS PROJECT SUCCEEDS, ALEX--THAT WILL BE ALL THE THANKS I NEED!
WHAT IS A MEMORY? IT IS THE SEARING SOUND OF DEVASTATION--AS YOU WATCH YOUR WORLD GO UP IN FLAMES BEFORE YOU...
OH, DEAR GOD--NO! ALEX'S LAB...
WARAROOM!
WHAT IS A MEMORY? IT IS THE GAPING WOUND THAT ONCE HAD BEEN YOUR HEART--WHEN YOU LEARN YOU ARE ALONE...
DON'T GO IN THERE! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO SEE, LINDA! ALEX IS DEAD!
OH, DAMIAN, NO...NO...NO.. NO...NO...

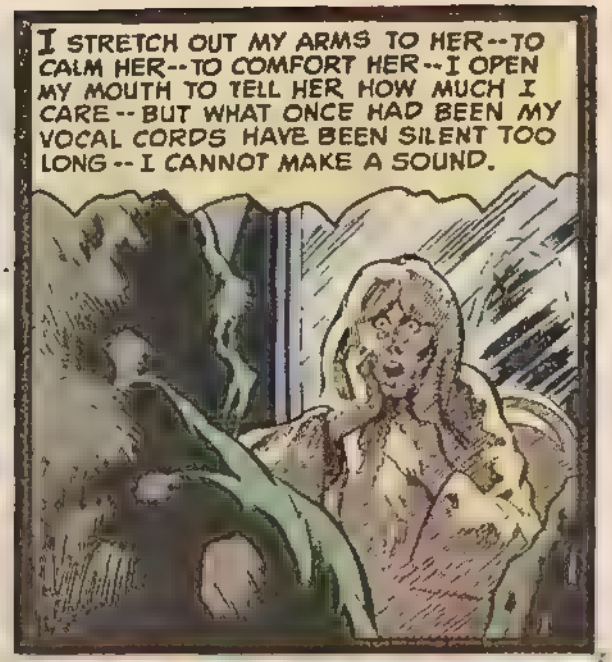
WHAT IS A MEMORY? IT IS A FLEETING FANTASY FAR TOO PAINFUL TO LONG REMAIN--THAT CARRIES YOU BACK THROUGH THE PORTAL OF THE PAST TO THE HARSH REALITY OF NOW...
LINDA, YOU HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD I'VE SAID!
I'M SORRY, DARLING--MY MIND WAS WANDERING--FORGIVE ME!
A HOLLOW RAIN HAS BEGUN TO FALL--AS COLD AND EMPTY AS THE ACHING DEEP WITHIN ME--I CAN BEAR IT NO LONGER--THE GRIM, GRAY MANOR STANDS STARK AGAINST THE NIGHT, MOCKING ME--I BEGIN TO MOVE...
THE NIGHT HAS GROWN COLDER NOW--YOU CAN FEEL IT CROUCHED IN THE DARKNESS--WAITING FOR YOU...
IS SOMETHING WRONG, LINDA? YOU DON'T SEEM WELL!
ONLY THE CHILL NIGHT AIR, DARLING--IT WILL PASS!
YOU LOOK INTO YOUR HUSBAND'S EYES--AND YOU SEE ONLY SHADOWS--DARK, VEILED THINGS THAT WHISPER TO THE SURFACE--AND QUICKLY FADE AWAY--AND YOU WONDER WHAT IS GOING THROUGH HIS MIND...
DEAR, SWEET LINDA--HOW TRULY LOVELY YOU REALLY ARE!
"I NEVER REALLY FORGAVE ALEX FOR MARRYING YOU WHEN HE KNEW HOW MUCH I LOVED YOU--YOU'LL NEVER KNOW HOW HARD IT WAS FOR ME TO KEEP UP THE FACADE OF THE 'ETERNAL FRIEND!'"
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO MY TWO DEAREST FRIENDS!

"TO SEE YOU EVERY DAY--SO CLOSE AND YET SO IMPOSSIBLY DISTANT--NEVER TO KNOW YOUR TOUCH OR THE FRAGRANCE OF YOUR HAIR--IT WAS MORE THAN I COULD BEAR..."
"IT WAS I WHO ARRANGED THE EXPLOSION--ALONE AT NIGHT IN ALEX'S DARKENED LABORATORY-QUIETLY ALTERING THE VITAL COMPONENTS--TO RID MYSELF OF THE ONLY OBSTACLE IN MY WAY -MY BEST FRIEND.."
"YOU'LL NEVER KNOW THAT ALEX WASN'T KILLED IN THE EXPLOSION--THAT I CARRIED HIS BATTERED AND BLOODY FORM OUT INTO THE FETID INTERIOR OF THE SWAMP BEYOND--AND BURIED IT THERE..."
I WAS EVERY BIT THE BEREAVED FRIEND AT THE FUNERAL--ALWAYS THE COMFORTING SHOULDER--THE TENDER WORD--IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL YOU TURNED TO ME FOR COMFORT--OUR MARRIAGE WAS INEVITABLE!
FORGIVE ME, DARLING--BUT THE CHILL HAS GROWN WORSE! PERHAPS I OUGHT TO RETIRE TO MY ROOM!
OF COURSE, LINDA--HOW THOUGHTLESS OF ME! GO AHEAD... I'LL JOIN YOU SHORTLY!

YOU WALK QUIETLY DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO THE SHELTER OF YOUR ROOM--AND YOU CAN FEEL DAMIAN'S GAZE FOLLOWING YOU--SEARING TREMORS INTO THE SMALL OF YOUR BACK...
SHE CAN'T BEAR MY TOUCH ANYMORE--THAT'S THE FIRST SIGN! ALL THE LITTLE SCRAPS OF INFORMATION SHE'S BEEN GATHERING ARE COMING TOGETHER AT LAST!
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SHE REALIZES THAT I KILLED ALEX--AND THAT WILL MEAN MY END! HOWEVER MUCH I CARE FOR LINDA, MY OWN NECK COMES FIRST... LINDA MUST DIE!
THE CANDLES THAT LIGHT YOUR ROOM PROVIDE THE ONLY REAL WARMTH YOU'VE FELT THIS NIGHT--BUT EVEN THROUGH THAT MELLOW GLOW, THE CHILL RETURNS ONCE MORE...
DAMIAN IS HALF-WAY ACROSS THE HOUSE... WHY CAN'T I SHAKE THE FEELING THAT SOMEONE IS WATCHING ME?
MY HEART BEATS SOFTLY ONCE AGAIN--FOR THE SPARKLE IN HER EYES FILLS MY SOUL WITH A JOY I CANNOT DESERVE--LINDA--HER NAME RINGS LIKE FINE CRYSTAL--HER HAIR SHINES LIKE GOLD...
LINDA? ARE YOU FEELING BETTER, DARLING?
A LITTLE BETTER, I SUPPOSE, DAMIAN... BUT DON'T WORRY YOURSELF--IT REALLY IS NOTHING!
NONSENSE! COME--I'LL MASSAGE YOUR NECK--THAT SHOULD WORK OUT THE CHILL!
I WATCH DAMIAN RIDGE WALK SOFTLY ACROSS THE RUG AND SOMETHING GLITTERS IN HIS HAND--A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE!
12

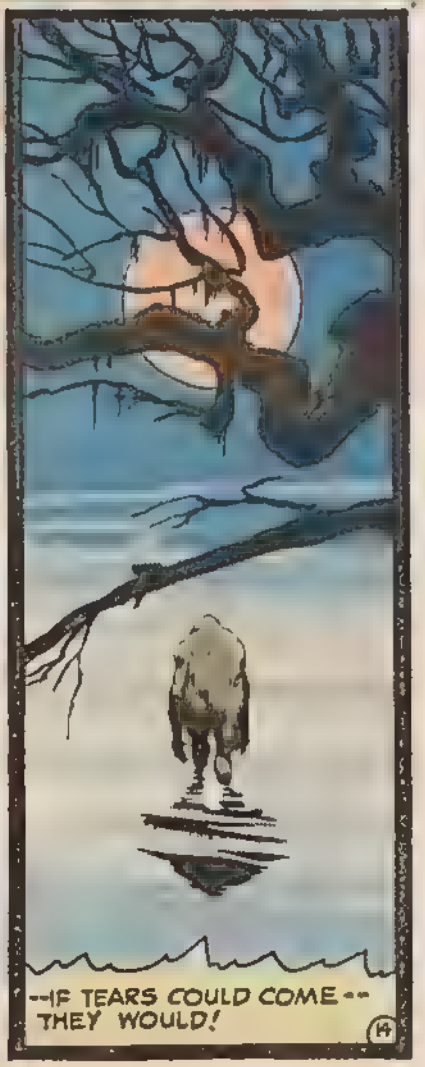
HE STANDS SILENTLY BEHIND HER, THE NEEDLE POISED TO STRIKE -- TO END THE LIFE OF THE ONLY THING IN THIS WORLD THAT MAKES MY EXISTENCE BEARABLE -- THE ONLY REASON I LIVE -- FURY FILLS THE SPACES BEHIND MY EYES -- AND I WALK INTO THE ROOM ...
OH, GOD-- NO!
GRRASSHHHH
WITH A SPEED I HAVE NEVER KNOWN BEFORE, I MOVE THE FETID BULK THAT IS MY BODY ACROSS THE SPAN OF FEET -- AND THE CLAW THAT IS MY HAND CLOSES UPON DAMIAN'S WRIST -- CRUSHING IT ...
GET AWAY-- GET AWAY FROM... ARRRGGHH!
SLOWLY -- CERTAINLY -- I FORCE THE LIFE FROM DAMIAN'S BLACK-HEARTED BODY -- A LIFE HE DOES NOT DESERVE ...
FOR SEVERAL SHORT MINUTES, DAMIAN RIDGE STRUGGLES FOR HIS UNWORTHY LIFE -- TEARING, CLAWING, RIPPING DECAYING SHREDS FROM WHAT ONCE HAD BEEN MY FLESH -- UNTIL, AT LAST, HE LIES STILL -- FOREVER ...
... AND MY BRIGHT, GOLDEN LADY STANDS SCREAMING BEHIND ME...
13

THE LOATHSOME MONSTROSITY TURNS FROM THE BODY OF YOUR HUSBAND AND REACHES FOR YOU WITH ARMS DRIPPING FILTH--FEAR WELLS UP WITHIN YOU LIKE A FLOOD--AND THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN SCREAMING RINGS IN YOUR EARS...
NO... NO... STAY AWAY... EEEyyYAAAHH!


I STRETCH OUT MY ARMS TO HER--TO CALM HER--TO COMFORT HER--I OPEN MY MOUTH TO TELL HER HOW MUCH I CARE--BUT WHAT ONCE HAD BEEN MY VOCAL CORDS HAVE BEEN SILENT TOO LONG--I CANNOT MAKE A SOUND.

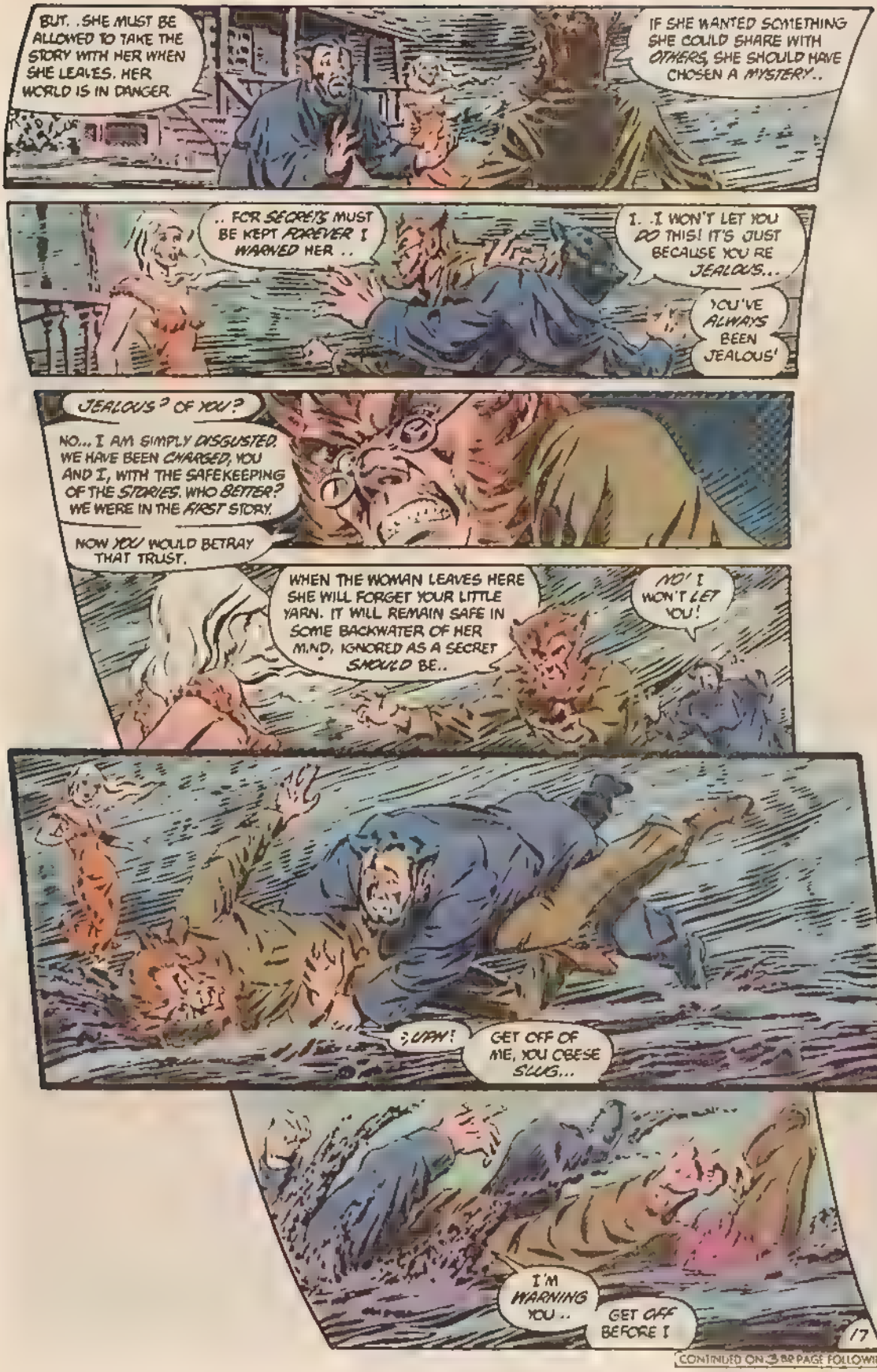
THE TORTURED, SHATTERED LOOK IN HER ONCE-SPARKLING EYES IS MORE THAN I CAN ENDURE -- I TURN MY FACE AWAY FROM HER--AND I START TO GO HOME...

ONLY THE SWAMP IS KIND TO ME NOW--IT IS ONLY THE SWAMP THAT CARES--I LOOK DOWN AT MY WRIST--AT THE BARREN PLACE WHERE ONCE THERE WAS A GOLDEN BRACELET --AND I WONDER WHERE IT IS...


--IF TEARS COULD COME-- THEY WOULD!
14

"...AND IF TEARS COULD COME, THEY WOULD."
THE END.
THERE... A SAD LITTLE STORY, ISN'T IT?
BUT... BUT THAT'S ALEC'S STORY!
ALEC HOLLAND... NOT ALEX OLSEN! AND IT DIDN'T HAPPEN AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY... IT HAPPENED DECADES LATER!
LOOK, WHAT IS THIS?
IT IS THE SECRET! THE SECRET YOU CAME TO LEARN!
ALEC HOLLAND WAS NOT THE FIRST THING TO WALK THE SWAMPS!
THERE WERE OTHERS BEFORE HIM.
BUT... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. EVEN ALLOWING FOR COINCIDENCE...
NO! NOT COINCIDENCE! DESIGN!
IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, THERE HAVE COME SOUR TIMES WHEN THE EARTH FEELS COMPELLED TO CREATE AN ELEMENTAL CHAMPION FOR ITSELF.
BUT ALEC'S TRANSFORMATION WAS AN ACCIDENT...
THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS. SOUR TIMES ARE RETURNING TO YOUR WORLD, AND YOUR WORLD HAS AGAIN SHAPED A PROTECTOR TO STAND AGAINST THEM.
THAT IS WHAT YOU CAME TO LEARN!
NOW FORGIVE ME, BUT IF THE WARNING IS TO BE ANY USE TO YOU, WE MUST HURRY...
HURRY? BUT WHY? I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

MY BROTHER! IF I CAN SNEAK YOU OUT BEFORE HE THINKS TO CHECK ON OUR WHEREABOUTS, EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT...
LOOK, PLEASE, I REALLY CAN'T FOLLOW THIS. IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE..
IT'S MY FAULT. I'M SO BAD AT EXPLAINING THINGS...
JUST REMEMBER THE STORY OF ALEX OLSEN. TELL YOUR SWAMP THING THE TALE AS I TOLD IT TO YOU...
THEN, WHEN THE TROUBLE STARTS, IT WILL HELP HIM UNDERSTAND HIS PLACE IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS.
IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT IT'S THE BEST I CAN DO.
THROUGH HERE...
MY BROTHER'S PROBABLY BUSY FEEDING HIS GARGOYLES RIGHT NOW...
IF YOU GO ACROSS THE GROUNDS AND OUT THROUGH THE GATE, YOU'LL MAKE IT BACK TO WAKEFULNESS WITH THE SECRET INTACT AND READY TO PASS ON...
...BUT THEN IT WOULDN'T BE A SECRET, WOULD IT?
YOU KNOW THE RULES, BROTHER...
...AND NOW YOU MUST PAY THE FORFEIT.
16


BUT. . SHE MUST BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE STORY WITH HER WHEN SHE LEAVES. HER WORLD IS IN DANGER.
IF SHE WANTED SOMETHING SHE COULD SHARE WITH OTHERS, SHE SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN A MYSTERY..
.. FOR SECRETS MUST BE KEPT FOREVER I WARNED HER ..
I. .I WON'T LET YOU DO THIS! IT'S JUST BECAUSE YOU RE JEALOUS..
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN JEALOUS!
JEALOUS ? OF YOU ?
NO... I AM SIMPLY DISGUSTED. WE HAVE BEEN CHARGED, YOU AND I, WITH THE SAFEKEEPING OF THE STORIES. WHO BETTER? WE WERE IN THE FIRST STORY.
NOW YOU WOULD BETRAY THAT TRUST.
WHEN THE WOMAN LEAVES HERE SHE WILL FORGET YOUR LITTLE YARN. IT WILL REMAIN SAFE IN SOME BACKWATER OF HER MIND, IGNORED AS A SECRET SHOULD BE..
NO! I WON'T LET YOU!
;UHH!
GET OFF OF ME, YOU OBESE SLUG...
I'M WARNING YOU ..
GET OFF BEFORE I

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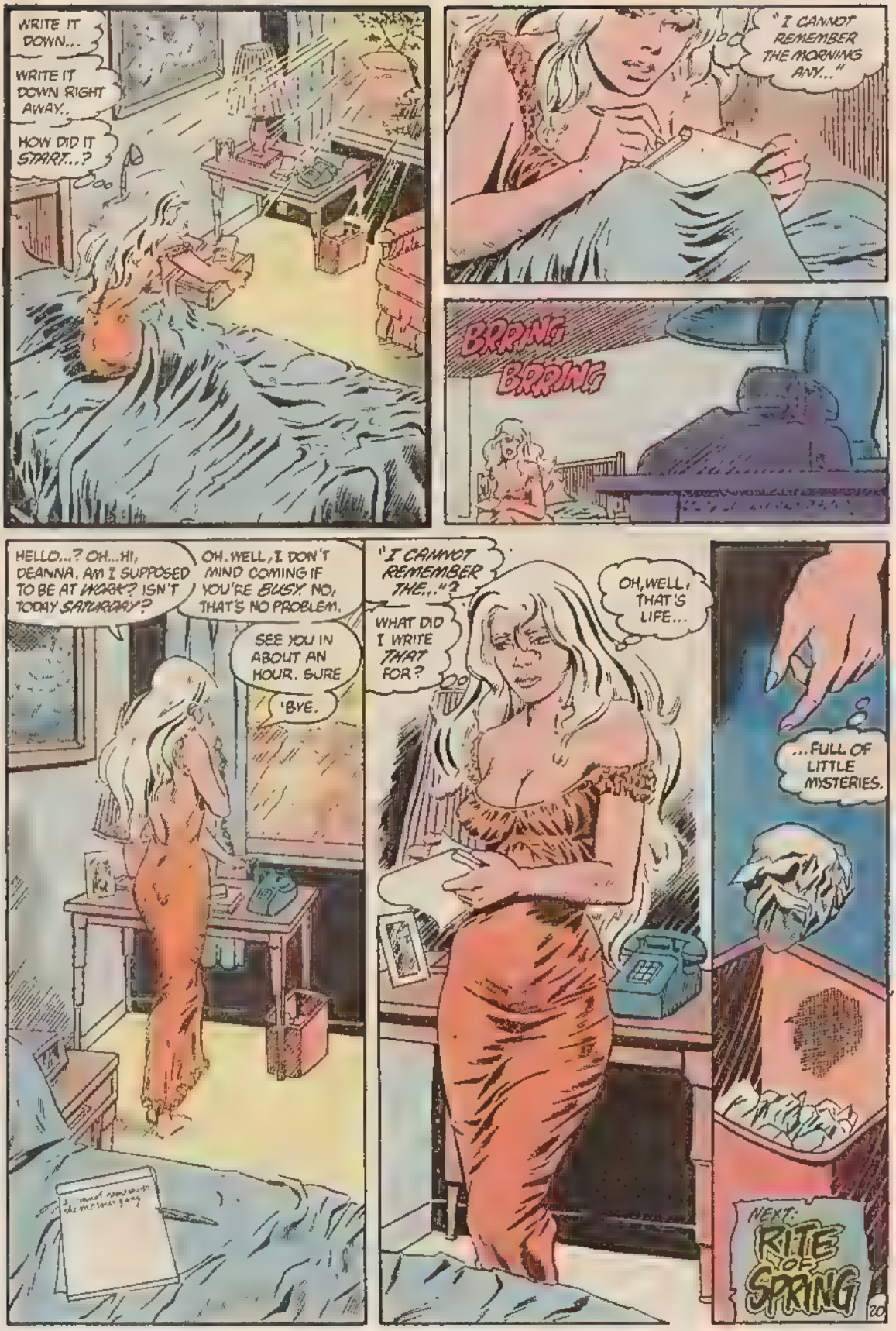
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

CAIN! NO!
NOT AGAIN!
RUNCH
RUNCH
RUNCH
YOU...
YOU MURDERED HIM.
YOUR OWN BROTHER...
MURDER? DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT MURDER!
I INVENTED MURDER!

AS FOR THAT FAT OAF, DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM. HE'LL BE UP AND ABOUT TOMORROW, BUMBLING AROUND JUST AS GOOD AS NEW..
...AT LEAST UNTIL THE NEXT TIME.
IT'S ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW THAT NOBODY WANTS TO HEAR THE STORIES ANYMORE.
THE SAME ACT OVER AND OVER AGAIN..
IT'S OUR PUNISHMENT, FOR DOING IT THE FIRST TIME.
BUT WHY SHOULD YOU BOTH BE PUNISHED FOR SOMETHING THAT YOU DID? IT ISN'T FAIR!
OF COURSE IT'S FAIR! I'M BEING PUNISHED FOR BEING THE FIRST PREDATOR..
...AND HE'S BEING PUNISHED FOR BEING THE FIRST VICTIM.
NOW... I THINK IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO LEAVE.
REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR SECRET WITH YOU, TOO BAD THAT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO SHARE IT WITH ANYBODY
WAIT! DON'T LEAVE ME HERE!
HOW CAN I SEE WHERE I'M GOING IN THIS FOG?
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND MY WAY.
HOME?


WRITE IT DOWN...
WRITE IT DOWN RIGHT AWAY..
HOW DID IT START...?
"I CANNOT REMEMBER THE MORNING ANY..."
BRRING BRRING
HELLO...? OH...HI, DEANNA. AM I SUPPOSED TO BE AT WORK? ISN'T TODAY SATURDAY?
OH. WELL, I DON'T MIND COMING IF YOU'RE BUSY. NO, THAT'S NO PROBLEM.
SEE YOU IN ABOUT AN HOUR. SURE
'BYE.
"I CANNOT REMEMBER THE..."?
WHAT DID I WRITE THAT FOR?
OH, WELL, THAT'S LIFE...
...FULL OF LITTLE MYSTERIES.
NEXT: RITE OF SPRING

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34
MAR 85
SWAMP THING
BY
ALAN MOORE STEPHEN BISSETTE AND JOHN TOTLEBEN
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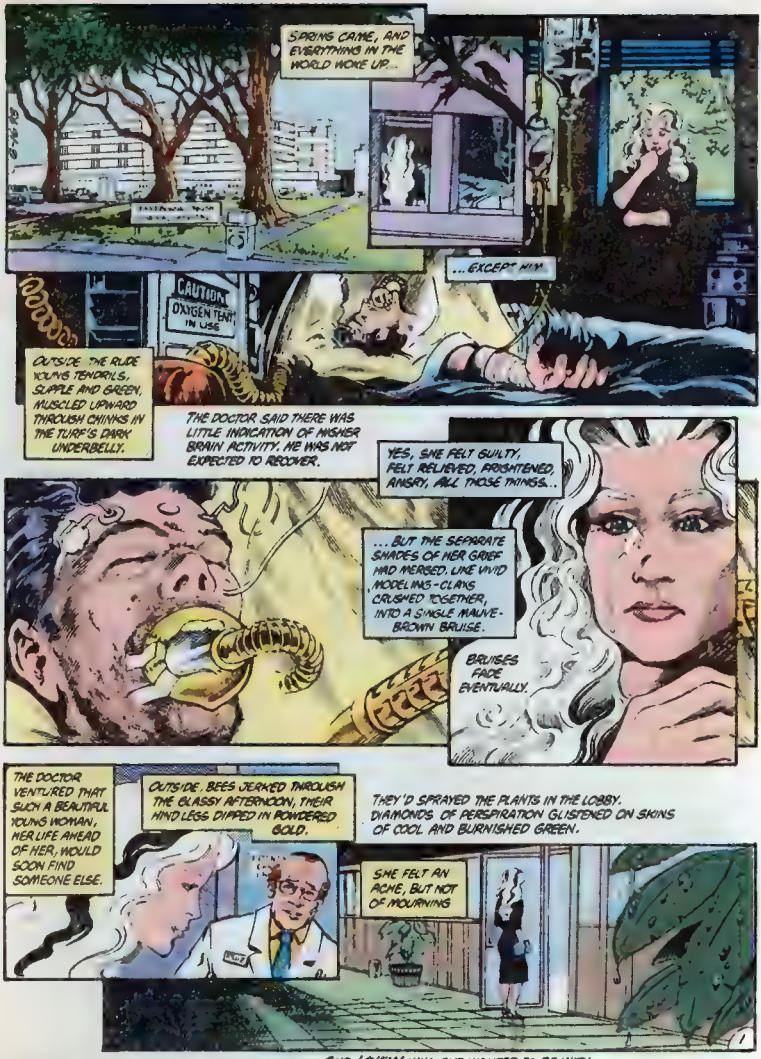
SPRING CAME, AND EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD WOKE UP...
...EXCEPT HIM.
CAUTION OXYGEN TENT IN USE
OUTSIDE THE RUDE YOUNG TENDRILS, SUPPLE AND GREEN, MUSCLED UPWARD THROUGH CHINKS IN THE TURF'S DARK UNDERBELLY.
THE DOCTOR SAID THERE WAS LITTLE INDICATION OF HIGHER BRAIN ACTIVITY. HE WAS NOT EXPECTED TO RECOVER.
YES, SHE FELT GUILTY, FELT RELIEVED, FRIGHTENED, ANGRY, ALL THOSE THINGS...
...BUT THE SEPARATE SHADES OF HER GRIEF HAD MERGED, LIKE VIVID MODELLING-CLAYS CRUSHED TOGETHER, INTO A SINGLE MAUVE-BROWN BRUISE.
BRUISES FADE EVENTUALLY.
THE DOCTOR VENTURED THAT SUCH A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN, HER LIFE AHEAD OF HER, WOULD SOON FIND SOMEONE ELSE.
OUTSIDE, BEES JERKED THROUGH THE CLASSY AFTERNOON, THEIR MIND LESS DIPPED IN POWDERED GOLD.
THEY'D SPRAYED THE PLANTS IN THE LOBBY. DIAMONDS OF PERSPIRATION GLISTENED ON SKINS OF COOL AND BURNISHED GREEN.
SHE FELT AN ACHE, BUT NOT OF MOURNING
SHE KNEW WHO SHE WANTED TO BE WITH.

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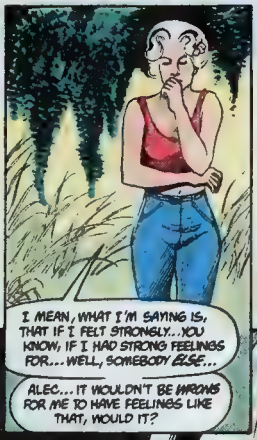
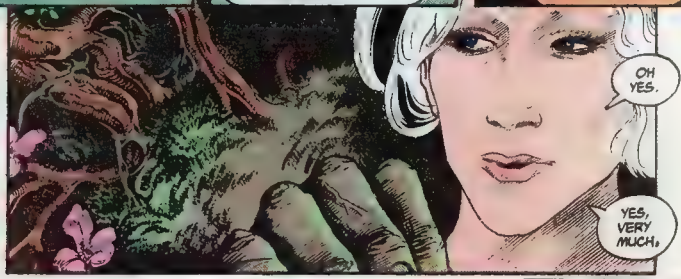
LETTERER

DO YOU MIND IF I...?
NO. PLEASE... TAKE IT...
Y'KNOW... THE WAY YOU LOOK...
I THINK I LIKE YOU BEST IN SPRING.

NO. IT'S TO DO WITH ME.
ALEC, SINCE MATT HAD HIS... ACCIDENT, I'VE KEPT MY FEELINGS...
WELL, LOOK, THERE WASN'T MUCH LOVE LEFT BETWEEN ME AND MATT BY THE END, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?


I MEAN, WHAT I'M SAYING IS, THAT IF I FELT STRONGLY... YOU KNOW, IF I HAD STRONG FEELINGS FOR... WELL, SOMEBODY ELSE...
ALEC... IT WOULDN'T BE WRONG FOR ME TO HAVE FEELINGS LIKE THAT, WOULD IT?



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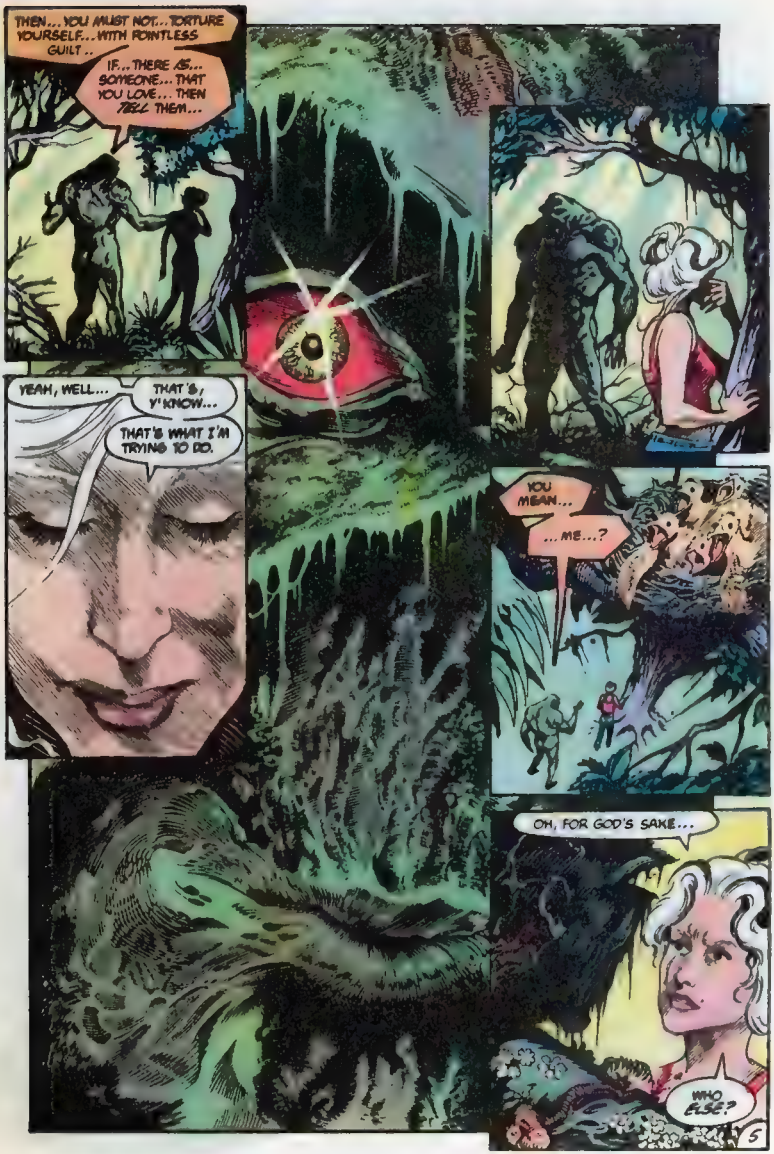
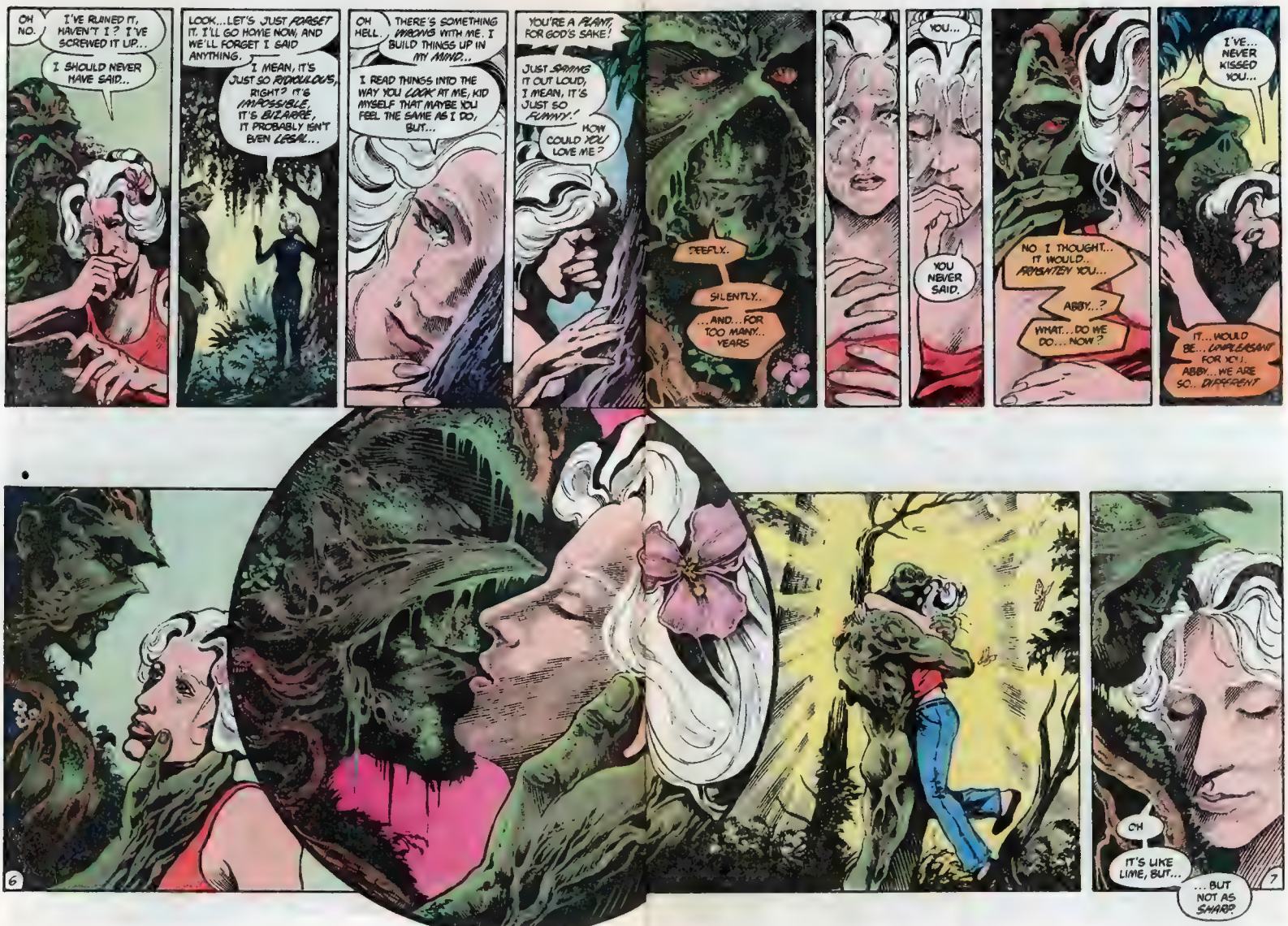
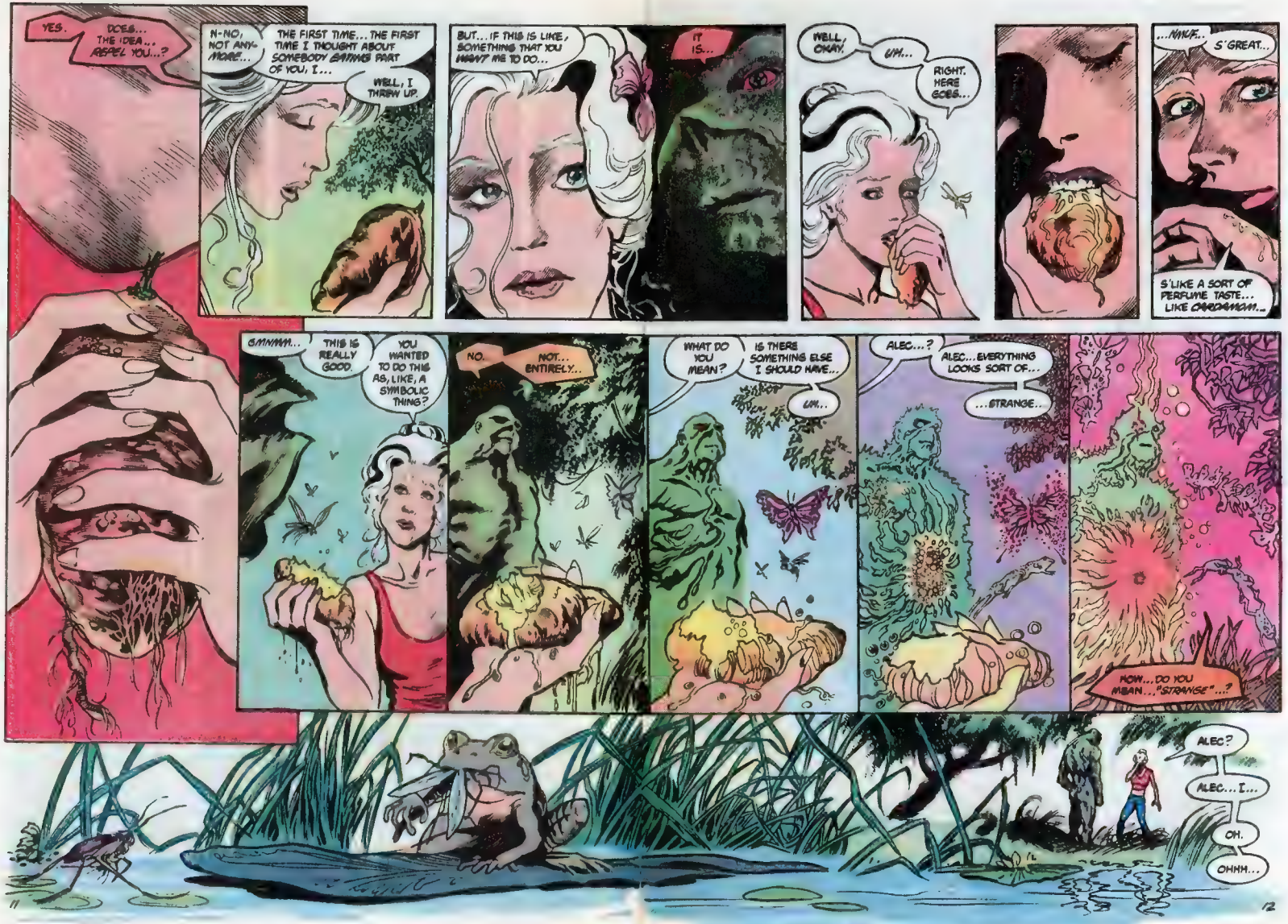

THEN... YOU MUST NOT... TORTURE YOURSELF... WITH POINTLESS GUILT...
IF... THERE IS... SOMEONE... THAT YOU LOVE... THEN TELL THEM...
YEAH, WELL...
THAT'S, Y'KNOW...
THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO.
YOU MEAN...
...ME...?
OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE...
WHO ELSE?

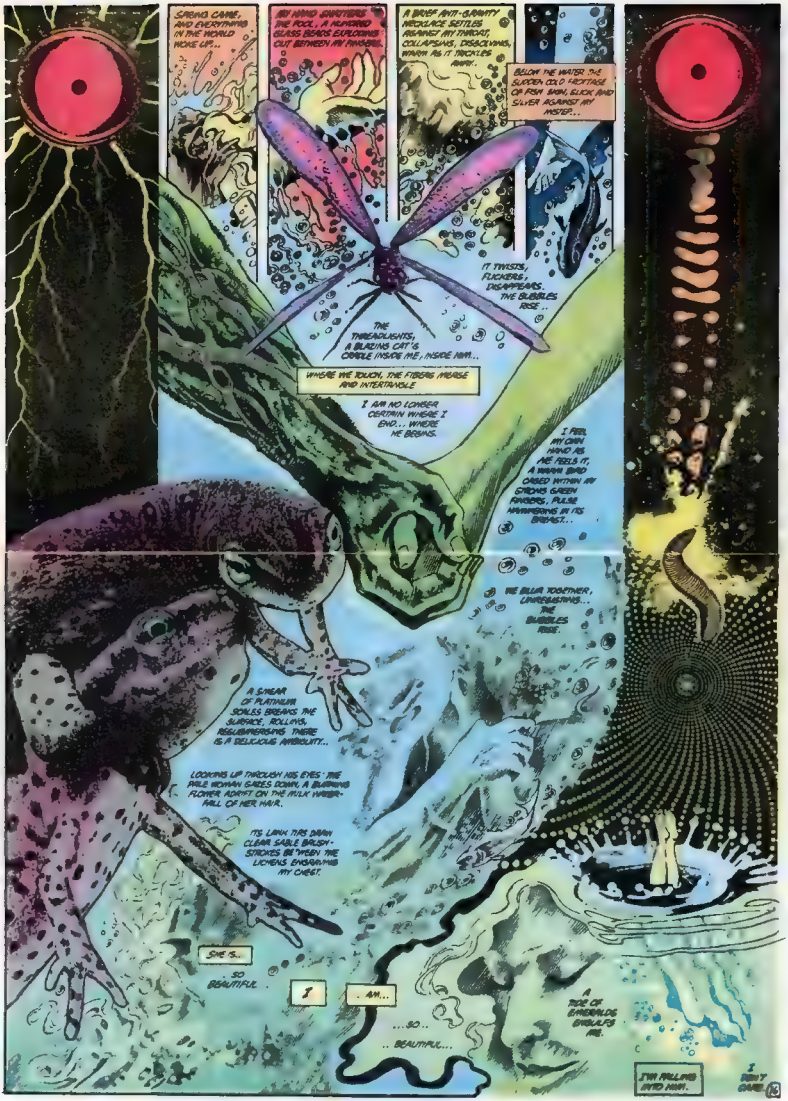

OH NO.
I'VE RUINED IT, HAVEN'T I? I'VE SCREWED IT UP...
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE SAID...
LOOK...LET'S JUST FORGET IT. I'LL GO HOME NOW, AND WE'LL FORGET I SAID ANYTHING.
I MEAN, IT'S JUST SO RIDICULOUS, RIGHT? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, IT'S BIZARRE, IT PROBABLY ISN'T EVEN LEGAL...
OH HELL.
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME. I BUILD THINGS UP IN MY MIND...
I READ THINGS INTO THE WAY YOU LOOK AT ME, KID MYSELF THAT MAYBE YOU FEEL THE SAME AS I DO, BUT...
YOU'RE A PLANT, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
JUST SAYING IT OUT LOUD, I MEAN, IT'S JUST SO FUNNY!
HOW COULD YOU LOVE ME?
TEEFLY..
SILENTLY..
...AND...FOR TOO MANY... YEARS
YOU...
YOU NEVER SAID.
NO I THOUGHT... IT WOULD.. FRIGHTEN YOU...
ABBY...?
WHAT...DO WE DO.... NOW?
I'VE... NEVER KISSED YOU...
IT...WOULD BE... UNPLEASANT FOR YOU. ABBY...WE ARE SO... DIFFERENT
OH
IT'S LIKE LIME, BUT...
...BUT NOT AS SHARP.
6
7

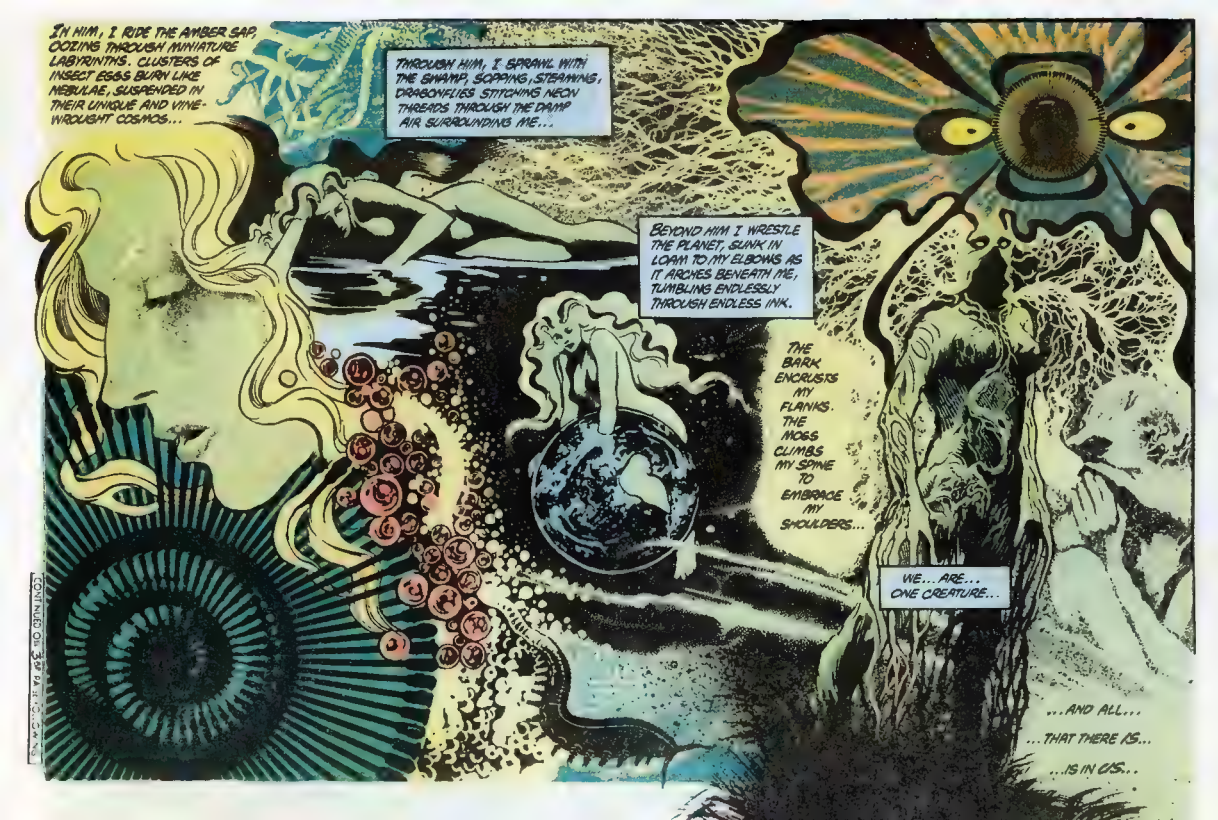
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

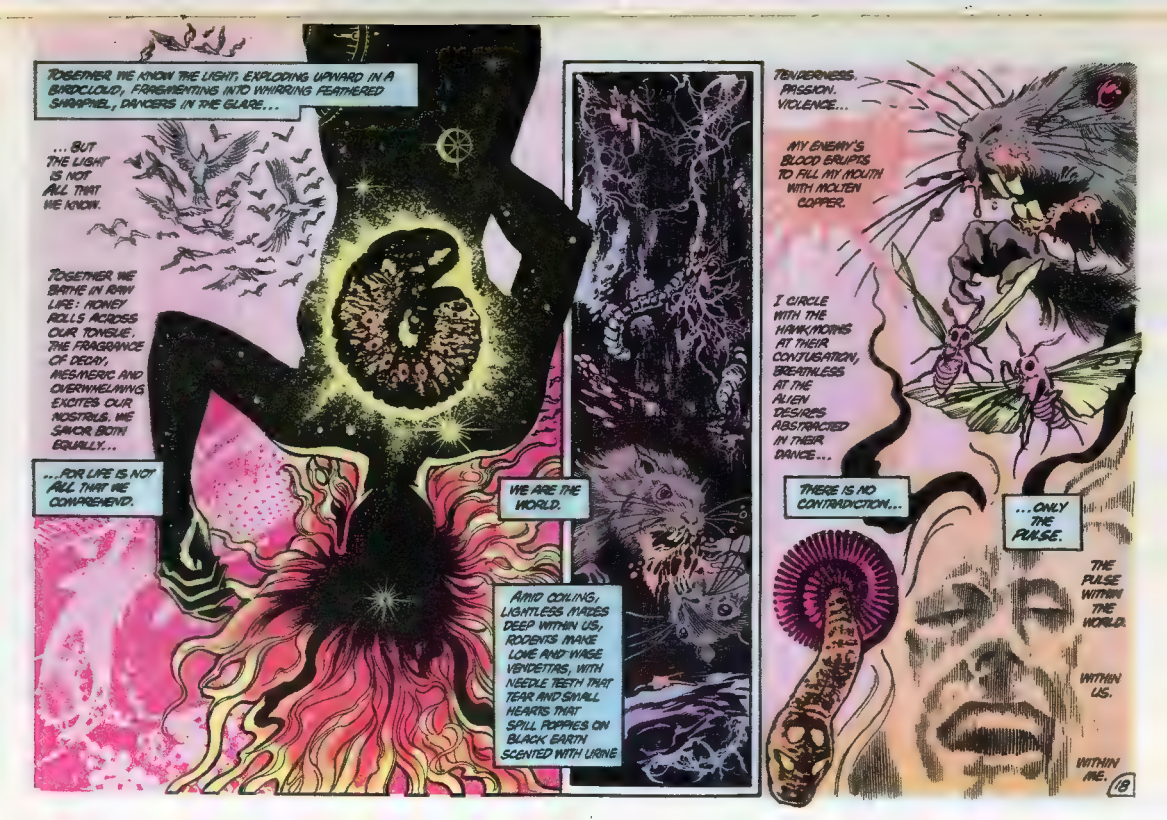
WELL, LISTEN...
I MEAN, I HAVE, Y'KNOW, THOUGHT ABOUT ALL THAT, BUT...
I MEAN, I KNOW THAT... THE PHYSICAL SIDE OF THINGS... I KNOW THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, BUT...
LOOK, WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT IT'S NOT IMPORTANT. NOT TO ME.
AS LONG AS ALL THE OTHER STUFF IS THERE. AS LONG AS YOU... WELL, WANT ME, I GUESS, AND SORT OF CARE ABOUT ME...
BUT THERE... SHOULD BE... SOME FORM... OF COMMUNION...
YEAH. YEAH, I KNOW, BUT...
...BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PHYSICAL.
NO.
PLEASE...
WAIT HERE... FOR A MOMENT...
POK
UH...
WHAT YOU WANT ME TO, UH...
WHAT, YOU MEAN, LIKE, I'M SUPPOSED TO, UH...
...EAT IT?
9
10

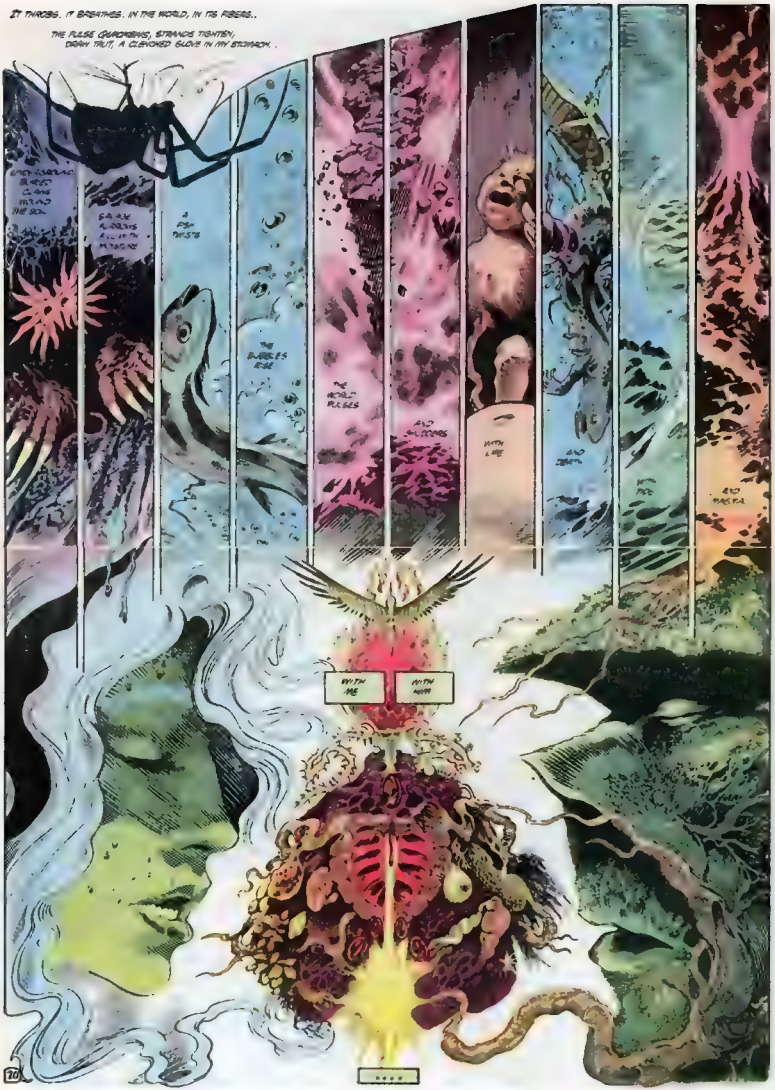

YES.
DOES... THE IDEA... REPEL YOU...?
N-NO, NOT ANY-MORE...
THE FIRST TIME... THE FIRST TIME I THOUGHT ABOUT SOMEBODY EATING PART OF YOU, I...
WELL, I THREW UP.
BUT... IF THIS IS LIKE, SOMETHING THAT YOU WANT ME TO DO...
IT IS...
WELL, OKAY.
UM...
RIGHT. HERE GOES...
...NNGF...
S'GREAT...
S'LIKE A SORT OF PERFUME TASTE... LIKE CARDAMOM...
MMMM...
THIS IS REALLY GOOD.
YOU WANTED TO DO THIS AS, LIKE, A SYMBOLIC THING?
NO.
NOT... ENTIRELY...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE I SHOULD HAVE...
UM...
ALEC...?
ALEC... EVERYTHING LOOKS SORT OF...
...STRANGE...
WOW... DO YOU MEAN... "STRANGE"...?
ALEC?
ALEC... I...
OH.
OHHH...

AND THESE LITTLE STARS .. THESE LITTLE JEWELS OF LIGHT THAT DRIFT ABOUT INSTARE
AND IT'S ALL MADE FROM THE SAME STUFF!


SPRING CAME, AND EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD WOKE UP...
MY HAND SHATTERS THE POOL, A HUNDRED GLASS BEADS EXPLODING OUT BETWEEN MY FINGERS.
A BRIEF ANTI-GRAVITY NECKLACE SETTLES AGAINST MY THROAT, COLLAPSING, DISSOLVING, WARM AS IT TRICKLES AWAY.
BELOW THE WATER THE SUDDEN COLD FROTTAGE OF FISH SKIN, SLICK AND SILVER AGAINST MY WISTER...
IT TWISTS, FLICKERS, DISAPPEARS. THE BUBBLES RISE..
THE THREADLIGHTS, A BLAZING CAT'S CRADLE INSIDE ME, INSIDE HIM...
WHERE WE TOUCH, THE FIBERS MERGE AND INTERTANGLE
I AM NO LONGER CERTAIN WHERE I END... WHERE HE BEGINS.
I FEEL MY OWN HAND AS ME FEELS IT, A WARM BIRD CAGED WITHIN MY STRONG GREEN FINGERS, PULSE HAMMERING IN ITS BREAST...
WE BLUR TOGETHER, UNRESISTING... THE BUBBLES RISE.
A SHEAR OF PLATINUM SCALES BREAKS THE SURFACE, ROLLING, REGURGITATING THERE IS A DELICIOUS AMBIGUITY...
LOOKING UP THROUGH HIS EYES' THE PALE WOMAN GAZES DOWN, A BLAZING FLOWER ADRIFT ON THE MILK WATER-FALL OF HER HAIR.
ITS LANK TIRS DRAIN CLEAR SABLE BRUSH-STROKES BETWEEN THE LICHENS ENGRAVING MY CHEST.
SHE IS...
SO BEAUTIFUL.
I
AM...
...SO...
.. BEAUTIFUL...
A TIDE OF EMERALDS ENGULFS ME.
I'M FALLING INTO HIM.
I DON'T CARE.
16


IN HIM, I RIDE THE AMBER SAP, OOZING THROUGH MINIATURE LABYRINTHS. CLUSTERS OF INSECT EGGS BURN LIKE NEBULAE, SUSPENDED IN THEIR UNIQUE AND VINE-WROUGHT COSMOS...
THROUGH HIM, I SPRAWL WITH THE SWAMP, SOPPING, STEAMING, DRAGONFLIES STITCHING NEON THREADS THROUGH THE DAMP AIR SURROUNDING ME...
BEYOND HIM I WRESTLE THE PLANET, SUNK IN LOAM TO MY ELBOWS AS IT ARCHES BENEATH ME, TUMBLING ENDLESSLY THROUGH ENDLESS INK.
THE BARK ENCRUSTS MY FLANKS. THE MOSS CLIMBS MY SPINE TO EMBRACE MY SHOULDERS...
WE... ARE... ONE CREATURE...
...AND ALL... ...THAT THERE IS... ...IS IN US...
CONTINUED ON 39 PAGE


TOGETHER WE KNOW THE LIGHT, EXPLODING UPWARD IN A BIRDCLOUD, FRAGMENTING INTO WHIRRING FEATHERED SHRAPNEL, DANCERS IN THE GLARE...
...BUT THE LIGHT IS NOT ALL THAT WE KNOW.
TOGETHER WE BATHE IN RAW LIFE: HONEY ROLLS ACROSS OUR TONGUE. THE FRAGRANCE OF DECAY, MESMERIC AND OVERWHELMING, EXCITES OUR NOSTRILS. WE SAVOR BOTH EQUALLY...
...FOR LIFE IS NOT ALL THAT WE COMPREHEND.
WE ARE THE WORLD.
AMID COILING, LIGHTLESS MAZES DEEP WITHIN US, ROODENTS MAKE LOVE AND WAGE VENDETTAS, WITH NEEDLE TEETH THAT TEAR AND SMALL HEARTS THAT SPILL POPPIES ON BLACK EARTH SCENTED WITH URINE
TENDERNESS. PASSION. VIOLENCE...
MY ENEMY'S BLOOD ERUPTS TO FILL MY MOUTH WITH MOLTEN COPPER.
I CIRCLE WITH THE HAWKMOTHS AT THEIR COITUS, BREATHLESS AT THE ALIEN DESIRES ABSTRACTED IN THEIR DANCE...
THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION...
...ONLY THE PULSE.
THE PULSE WITHIN THE WORLD.
WITHIN US.
WITHIN ME.
18


IT THROBS. IT BREATHES. IN THE WORLD, IN ITS FIBERS..
THE PULSE QUICKENS, STRANDS TIGHTEN, DRAW TAUT, A CLENCHED GLOVE IN MY STOMACH..
A FISH TWISTS
THE BUBBLES RISE
THE WORLD PULSES
AND SHUDDERS
WITH LIFE
AND DEATH
WITH TIDE
AND MASTA
WITH ME
WITH HIM
20

CONTINUED ON 35 PAGE FOLLOWING

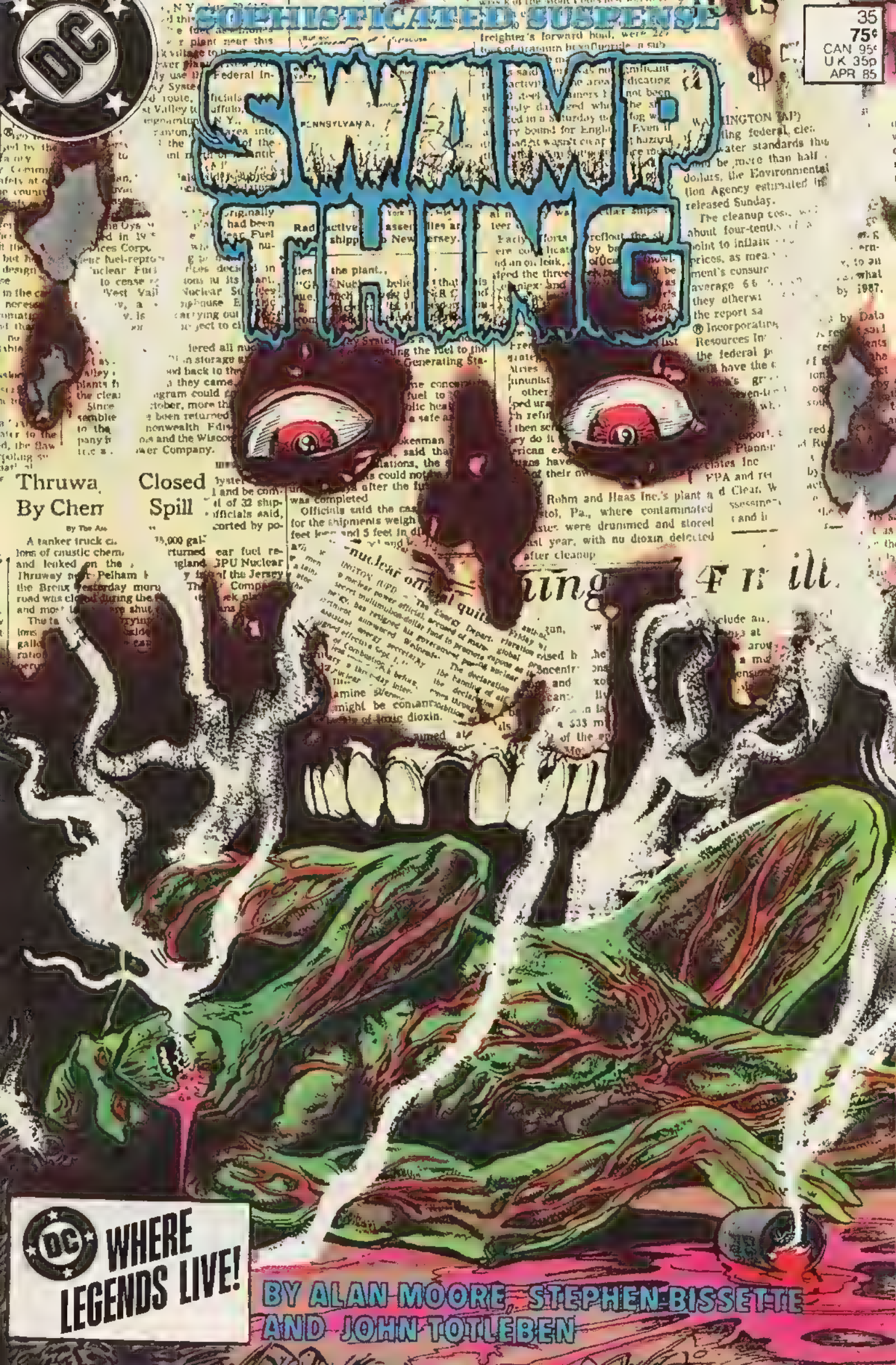
DOES THIS... UM...
DOES THIS MEAN WE'RE GOING OUT?

nExt: "the Nukeface papers!"

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE

35
75¢
CAN 95¢
U.K. 35p
APR 85

SWAMP THING



BY ALAN MOORE, STEPHEN BISSETTE AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

PROLOGUE:

While his lover sleeps, the swamp creature sits in the smoldering pink dusk and overlooks his territories.

To the east, paperboys have wearied halfway through their rounds, dumping their remaining papers somewhere discreet and telling the newsagent he must have miscounted. The dead headlines dance upon a lukewarm wind, indecent as tumbleweed bowling through the fading light.

He watches the sheets of newsprint flap like huge moths, crippled by their own weight, tripping clumsily amongst the black trees. Their pages are full of obsolete tragedies and discarded faces; all the carefully looped histories of a world he no longer belongs to.

Behind him, his lover mumbles strange dream-submerged syllables, but does not wake, and he is content beneath a darkening and welcome sky the swamp engulfs them. It is their own damp cosmos, and the troubles of the world beyond seem no more than the whispered conversations of distant mourners.

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DC Comics Inc A Warner Communications Company

ED?

ED? I WANNA SULP: TELLYA SOMETHIN'..

I'M AN AMERICAN, ED Y'KNOW WHAT I MEAN BY THAT?

I MEAN.. I AM A CITIZEN OF AMERICA.

THAT'S THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ED...

MY NAME AIN'T ED.

Y'KNOW.. I'M COLD.

THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S NIGHTTIME, ED I'LL LIGHT A FIRE...

WHY DON'TYA LIGHT A FIRE?

THAT'S WHAT I SAID! DAMMIT, ED, I JUST SAID I WAS GONNA LIGHT A FIRE...

SOME PAPER...

GOTTA MATCH HERE SOMEPLACE...

;UP!

KOUMA DAI

Nuclear Accident

Radioactive Pedestals Going Back to M

2

THERE

SKHRIEK!

SWAMP THING
CREATED BY LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON
The NUKE-FACE papers part 1"
By Toxic Fumes, Are Dead on L.I.
Vere Cleaning Cesspool
3d Worker Injured
ment worried
ashed-up waste
T.V.A. Lays Off
Over Nuclear Pl
THERE'S GLORY FOR YA...
Alan Moore: WRITER
Stephen Bissette and John Totleben: ARTISTS
Karen Berger: EDITOR
Tatjana Wood: colorist
John Costanza: letterer
3

IT'S BOB.
MY NAME'S BOB.
GULP
"BOB"... "ED"... THESE DAYS, WHO CARES?
NOBODY GIVES A DAMN ANYMORE, AN' THAT'S THE HONEST TRUTH...
MRS. MEREL THREW ME OUTTA THE HOUSE. SHE WENT CRAZY AND STABBED ME [redacted] NAIL FILE.
THAT'S WHY I'M OUT HERE...
WELL, MYSELF, ED, I'M A PENNSYLVANIA MAN...
GLEN MILLER WROTE A SONG ABOUT [redacted]...
OUTTA JUICE.
PLUP!
DADADALADADA DA DA
HERE... Y'WANNA TRY SOME O' MINE?
DADADALADADA DA DA...
...AN' THEN THEY ALL SHOUT "PENNSYLVANIA SIX FIVE THOUSAND!"
GA-LOK
HA HA HA. I REMEMBER...
4

I REMEMBER THEY PLAYED IT ON FROM NIGHT, AN' I DANCED WITH SISSY AUTREY. HA HA HA...

GGKUHH!

IIIHGKUUH!!

ED?

NYEUGH! PFFUH...

HEH. HITS THE OL' SPOT, DON'T IT?

CLLUH...WHAT AS IT? I CAN STILL *TASTE* IT...

OH, JEEZ, I THINK I *SWALLOWED* SOME...

GIVE IT A CHANCE. IT GROWS ON YA. YOU JUST SIT BACK AN' LEMME TELLYA 'BOUT PENNSYLVANIA...

SAY, ED...

...HOW 'BOUT HAIR O' THE DOG?

NO?

AAAH, IT DON'T MATTER.

WHAT WAS I TALKIN' ABOUT...?

ear Waste

...ores Dumping

"OH, YEAH...

"PENNSYLVANIA...

"BLOSSOMVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA. YA HADDA SEE IT BACK INNA SIXTIES, WHEN THERE WAS WORK.

"THEY HADDA BIG EXPLOSION UP AT THE LOMBARD MINE IN 68.

"WHOLE DAMN COAL SEAM CAUGHT FIRE!

"IT'S BIN BURNIN' LIKE THAT FOR SIXTEEN YEAR, NOW.

"NOBODY WORTH SPEAKIN' OF LIVES THERE THESE DAYS.

"JUST MACHINES, Y'KNOW? DEAD OL' MACHINES...

"I WAS THERE TILL A MONTH OR SO BACK, BUT, Y'KNOW, IT ALL WENT T' HELL AN' I HADDA LEAVE...

"TELLYA FER NUTHIN', ED, I WISH I WAS BACK THERE.

"I WONDER WHAT THE PEOPLE 'RE DOIN' IN BLOSSOMVILLE TONIGHT?"

WALLACE?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO WAIT IN THE CAR, TREASURE.

IT'S COLD...

OH, I GOT BORED.

ARE YOU STILL THINKING ABOUT ALL THAT AWFUL TROUBLE?

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT

NO, I REALIZE THAT. IT'S JUST...

OH, I DON'T KNOW. I'M JUST GLAD THAT THE DUMP HERE HAS FINALLY BEEN CLOSED DOWN AND SEALED OFF

I'M JUST GLAD TO SEE THE BACK OF HIS HELLHOLE.

WALLACE, YOU KNOW, I WISH YOU WOULDN'T USE THAT WORD.

NO. I KNOW. I'M SORRY.

I WAS JUST THINKING...

THIS MUST ALL HAVE SEEMED LIKE SUCH A GOOD IDEA WHEN THEY STARTED OUT.

THE *STRIAMINES* WERE ALL USED UP AND EMPTY, AND NOBODY BUT THE BUMS AND WINOS EVER CAME NEAR. IT WAS AN IDEAL PLACE TO DUMP THE, Y'KNOW, THE...

THE STUFF

THE STUFF YEAH

THE COMPANY WAS STICKING IT IN THE *SLAG PITS* UNDER THE OLD *LOMBARD MINE*. IT WAS SAFE DOWN THERE! THEY DID *TESTS!*

WALLACE, I *KNOW* YOU! YOU WOULDN'T BE *INVOLVED* IF IT WAS SOMETHING THAT COULD *HURT* PEOPLE.

NO. NO, OF COURSE I WOULDN'T

BUT THEN THOSE *TRAMPS*, THOSE *BUMS*.. THEY ALL STARTED *VANISHING*...

WALLACE, YOU *KNOW* HOW DERELICTS ARE THOSE POOR MEN, THEY GET *LOST*, THEY LEAVE THE *AREA*...

IT'S GOD'S WILL. YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF

SAY, DID I TELL YOU ABOUT THAT THING I HEARD THOSE *KIDS* SAY? ABOUT ONE OF THOSE OLD MEN THAT *VANISHED*?

THEY SAID HE WAS "*OUT ON A BENDER WITH NUKEFACE*."

WHAT DOES THAT *MEAN*, DO YOU THINK?

I DON'T KNOW.

C'MON... IT'S GETTING COLDER. LET'S GET BACK IN THE *CAR*.

THE COMPANY WANTS US IN *LOUISIANA* BY *NOON TOMORROW*...

Nuclear Panel Votes For Proposal to Start 3 Mile Island Plant

"O' COURSE, *EVERYBODY* LEFT BLOSSOMVILLE IN THE *END*.."

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

EVEN *ME*, ED.

I STAYED ON AS LONG AS I COULD AFTER THE '68 *BURN-UP*...

OWED IT TO OLD JEFF LOMBARD. HE HIRED ME WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN THE PNEUMONIA TOOK HIM IN '64 ..

WE ARE NO COWS

I USED TO LIVE OUT IN THE *MINE*, JUST, Y'KNOW, LOOKIN' AFTER STUFF, KEEPIN' STUFF *TIDY*...

NUH

ROUND '72 OR SO, A LOTTA *COMPANY PEOPLE* CAME ROUND, STARTED PUTTIN' STUFF DOWN IN THE *OVERFLOW PITS*...

UAH...

AA...

HELL, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS...

BUT, Y'KNOW, WHEN A GUY'S *THIRSTY*, HE...

ED?

ED? YOU *ALL RIGHT*?

GETTIN' *CHILLY* AGAIN, HUH?

MY *TOOTH*...

MY *TOOTH* JUST CAME OUT.

WELL, I'LL TELLYA, I FIND THAT I DON'T NEED 'EM.. Y'KNOW, WHAT WITH NOT *EATIN'* SO MUCH..

HERE, LEMME STRAIGHTEN OUT THIS *WIRE* FOR YA, ED.

BOB.

SURE. SAY, YA GOTTA *MATCH*, ED?

COAT POCKET. I...

Y'KNOW, I...

EVERYTHING'S BLUE.

Y'KNOW...

EVERYTHING.

IT'S BLUE.

WRAP UP SOME RE-ED RO-SES FOR A BLU-U-UE LADEEE...

NEH NEH NEH.

Y'KNOW, I'DA NEVER LEFT BLOSSOMVILLE IF IT HADNA BIN FOR THE *TROUBLE*..

AFTER THE TROUBLE, THEY SENT AN *INVESTIGATOR* NICE GUY. CALLED ED SOMETHIN'...

AFTER HIM THEY SENT *ANOTHER* INVESTIGATOR, AN' THEN THEY POURED A LOTTA *CEMENT* DOWN ON MY STASH IN THE PIT...

HEARD 'EM SAY THEY WERE MOVIN' THE DUMP DOWN HERE, TO *LOUISIANA*.

I FIGURED, Y'KNOW, I MIGHT AS WELL TAG ALONG..

Y'LIKE THIS *FIRE* I MADE, ED?

YEAH, I GUESS YOU DO.

S'A FUNNY THING... EVEN THOUGH I LEFT *BLOSSOMVILLE*, IT'S LIKE I TOOK PART OF IT *WITH* ME, Y'KNOW?

IT'S LIKE BLOSSOMVILLE'S *STILL HERE*...

"NAY MAD, NAY DREAM:

"BLOSSOMVILLE'S STILL THERE IN MY DREAMS"

I WALK... THROUGH A BAD PLACE...

A BAD PLACE THAT I DO NOT KNOW...

I AM DREAMING

BUT WHOSE DREAM.. AM I DREAMING?

AND WHERE... ARE ALL THE PEOPLE?

SOMETHING... HAPPENED.. HERE.

SOMETHING BRIGHT AND AWFUL KISSED THE WORLD..

.. AND LEFT.. ITS SICKLY BLUE . LIPSTICK . PRINT.

THE SOIL IS CURDLED... AND ALL THAT GROWS... GROWS WRONG.

IN A SKIN OF BLACK CINDER, PUDDLES REFLECT FIRE... RED AND WET AND GLISTENING-LIKE SORES...

THE SONG OF STILLBORN & ROS ECHOES... THROUGH THE DEFORMED METAL TREES...

...THERE IS A RATTLE..

.. IN THE THROAT...

...OF THE WIND..

I'M ALONE

ALONE IN DEATHTOWN.

PLEASE...

LET IT NOT HAVE HAPPENED YET...

LET THERE STILL BE GRASS.
IT WAS A DREAM.
THE KATYDIDS... CONTINUE... THEIR MONOTONOUS ACCUSALS... AND ABBY... IS SAFE... BESIDE ME.
IT WAS A DREAM... I CAN... FORGET IT... AND RETURN... TO SLEEP...
NO.
NO I CAN'T.
Viewpoin
Easing toxic waste worries
OUR OPINION

"WASTE," THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL IT. WASTE FROM NUCULER FISHINS, SUPPOSED T'BE BAD FOR YA.

Y'KNOW, I WAS DRINKIN' THIS STUFF FOR A COUPLA MONTHS 'FORE I FOUND OUT WHAT IT WAS.

?UP!

THESE DAYS, EVERYTHIN'S SUPPOSED T'BE BAD FOR YA...

WHO CAN KEEP UP WITH ALL THAT HEALTH STUFF, ANYWAY? ALL THAT HIPPY ANTI-NUCULER STUFF..

I AGKYA, ED...WHADDA THEY EXPECT ME TO DO ABOUT IT?

RIGHT! THAT'S IT EXACTLY! THAT'S THE WORD! "COMMITTED"!

WE'RE COMMITTED TO NUCULER ENERGY CAN'T PRETEND IT NEVER HAPPENED...

"NATURAL POWER"? FORGET IT! HOW YA GONNA RUN A CAR ON WINDMILLS AN' WATERWHEELS?

ANSWER ME THAT!

SEE? YOU CAN'T! WE NEED NUCULER FISHING!

...AN' THERE'S DEFENSE! A LOTTA THE JUNK COMES OUTTA THESE PLANTS MAKES MISSILES AN' STUFF...

CLOSE 'EM DOWN, WE'LL ALL END UP ON THE COLLECTIVE FARM SLUGGIN' BACK VODKA!

WE RE COMMITTED, ED! COMMITTED AS AMERICAN CITIZENS!

I'M COMMITTED... YOU'RE COMMITTED. EVERYBODY'S COMMITTED!

SO WHY DON'T THEY ALL JUST SHUT UP ABOUT IT?

?UP!

BAKRANG!

SSSHHH! KEEP THE NOISE DOWN FOR GODSAKES.

GLUG GURGLE

AAH, THERE AIN'T NOBODY ABOUT. NOT IN *THIS* SCUM-PIT...

MAYBE. HOW MANY MORE DRUMS OF THIS GARBAGE YOU GOT LEFT BACK THERE, ANYHOW?

OH, THIS IS THE LAST ONE...

FUB

...FOR THE MOMENT.

PLUSSH!

GOOD.

WHAT TIME'S THAT NERD *MONROE* ARRIVIN'?

TOMORROW, ROUND NOON. BRINGIN' HIS OL' LADY WITH HIM...

THE LITTLE *FAT* BROAD, ALWAYS TALKIN' 'BOUT *JESUS*? DIDN'T SHE HAVE A *FUNNY NAME*? WHAT THE HELL *WAS* THAT?

"TREASURE."

"TREASURE"! THAT'S RIGHT. *AHAHAHAHA*...

BEATS ME HOW A *WIMP* LIKE *MONROE* ENDS UP WORKIN' FOR THE COMPANY AT *ALL!*

YEAH, WELL, AFTER FRANK GILL WENT *A.W.O.L.* BACK IN PENNSYLVANIA, I GUESS THEY HADDA SETTLE FOR WHAT THEY COULD *GET*...

GSHLUG

DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT *PENNSYLVANIA*, MAN. THAT PLACE GAVE ME THE *CREEPS*...

YEAH? AN' THIS PLACE *DON'T?*

WELL, Y'KNOW, AT LEAST THIS PLACE LOOKS *HEALTHY.*

HEY, THAT *BOG* WE DUMPED THE *CARS* IN... IT'S PRETTY *DEEP*, RIGHT?

DEEP *ENOUGH.*

IT'S LIKE THEY *SAY:* OUTTA SIGHT IS OUTTA MIND...

"...AN' WHAT THE EYE DON'T *SEE*...

"...THE HEART DON'T *GRIEVE* OVER."

CONTINUED ON 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING

DEAD...

THAT'S WHAT IT IS ABOUT SWAMPS... TOO DAMP. NOTHIN' BURNS FOR LONG...

IT WAS DIFFERENT IN BLOSSOMVILLE...

I COULDA STAYED THERE FOREVER IF THEY HADNA CONCRETED OVER MY STASH...

DID I TELLYA THAT ALREADY? I FORGET...

I FORGET...

ALL THEY LEFT ME WAS A COUPLA FLASKS THAT I SIPHONED OFF THIS BIG OL' DRUM THAT SPLIT OPEN.

AIN'T MUCH LEFT NOW... THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE...

WHEN A MAN NEEDS A TASTE...

GLOSH

ANYWAY, ED, S'BIN GOOD TALKIN' TO YA.

I GOTTA GO NOW. THERE'S MORE O' THIS STUFF 'ROUND HERE SOMEPLACE. I'M GONNA GO SNIFF IT OUT...

YOU TAKE CARE O' Y'SELF, NOW...

Uranium Shipme

By RICHARD BERNSTEIN

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Aug. 26 — A French cargo ship that sank off the coast of Belgium Saturday night was carrying canisters filled with a form of uranium used to make fuel for nuclear reactors, the ship's owner and French Government officials said today.

Guy Lacaze, the Secretary of State for Maritime Affairs, said in a

DADA DA LADA DA DA DA...

DADA DA LADA DA DA DA.

DADA DA LADA DA DA DA...

PLUP

PLUP

PENNSYLVANIA SIX-FIVE-OH-OH-OH!

HEH HEH...

NO DUMPING

HERE?

THEY DUMPED IT *HERE*...

THEY *BURIED IT* UNDER THE MUD!!

AWW, NO...

THEY GOT NO *RIGHT*! NO *RIGHT* TO BURY IT

I'M *ENTITLED*! I'M AN *AMERICAN CITIZEN*...

AW, NO. WHADDAMI GONNA DO?

DIG IT UP. GOTTA DIG IT UP...

I'M ENTITLED. I...

WHUH?

ED? THAT *YOU*?

YA GOTTA *HELP* ME, BUDDY...

THEY *BURIED* IT.

THEY BURIED IT UNNA THE *MUD*!

WHAT... ARE..YOU?

ME?

I'M AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.

AAAUUUGH

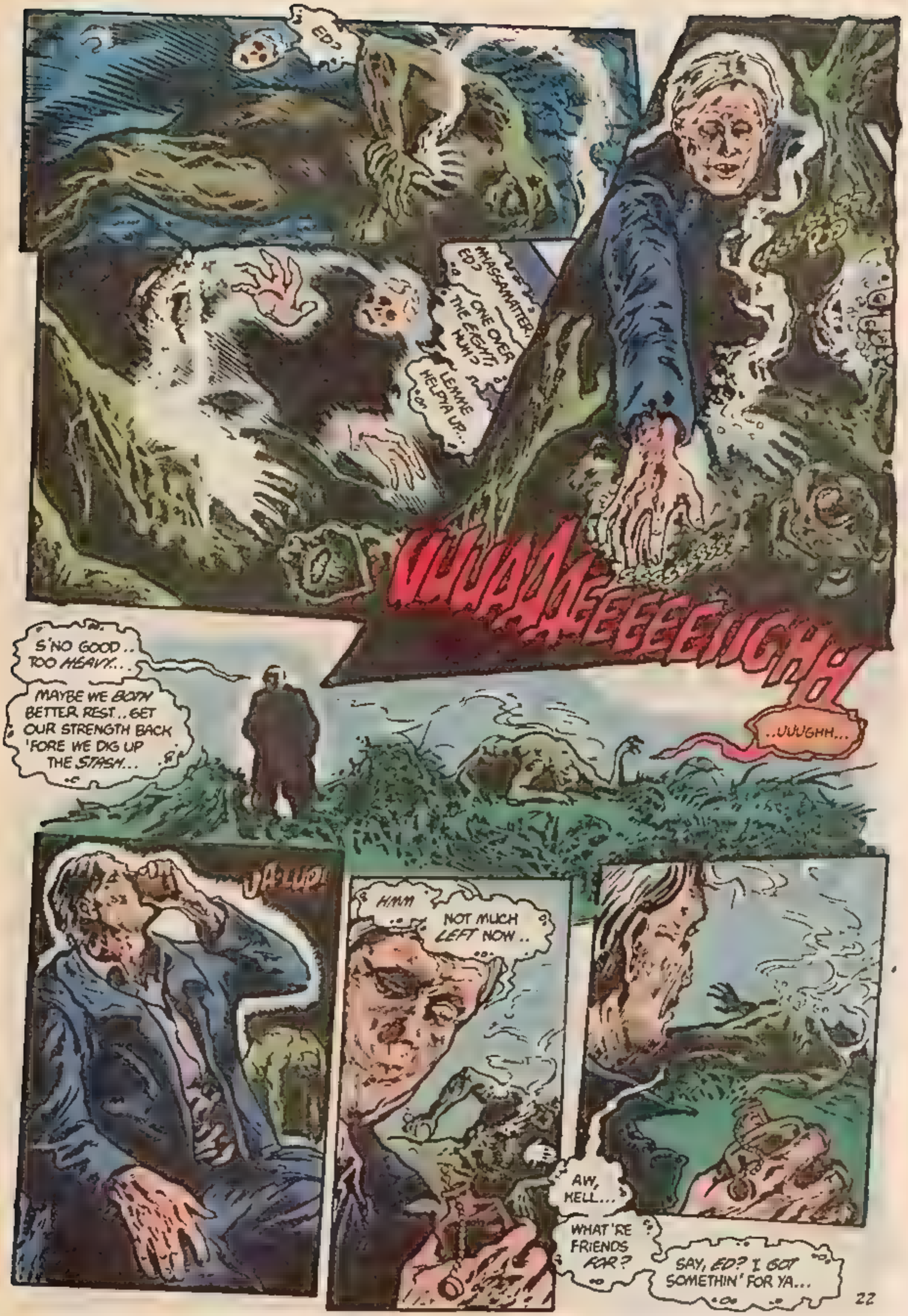
HHNNUH...

LISTEN, ED, WE GOTTA STICK TOGETHER. YA GOTTA HELP ME DIG IT UP..

YOU'RE LIKE ME, ED...

YOU'RE COMMITTED.

SSSS


ED?
MHASSAMATTER, ED?
ONE OVER THE EIGHT, HUH?
LEMME HELPYA UP...
UUUAAAEEEEEIIGHH
..UUUGHH...
S'NO GOOD.. TOO HEAVY...
MAYBE WE BOTH BETTER REST.. GET OUR STRENGTH BACK 'FORE WE DIG UP THE STASH...
JA-LUP!
HMM
NOT MUCH LEFT NOW..
AW, HELL...
WHAT'RE FRIENDS FOR?
SAY, ED? I GOT SOMETHIN' FOR YA...

"OVER THE TEETH AN' ROUNNA GUMS, LOOK OUT STUMMICK...

"...HERE IT COMES!"

THERE...

GA GURGLE!

THERE'S GLORY FOR YA, HUH?

NOW, YOU JUST SIT BACK A WHILE, ED...

...AN' LEMME TELLYA 'BOUT PENNSYLVANIA...

...to be concluded...

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
75¢
36
MAY 85
SWAMP THING
BY
ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN
0 70989 31715 05

SWAMP THING:

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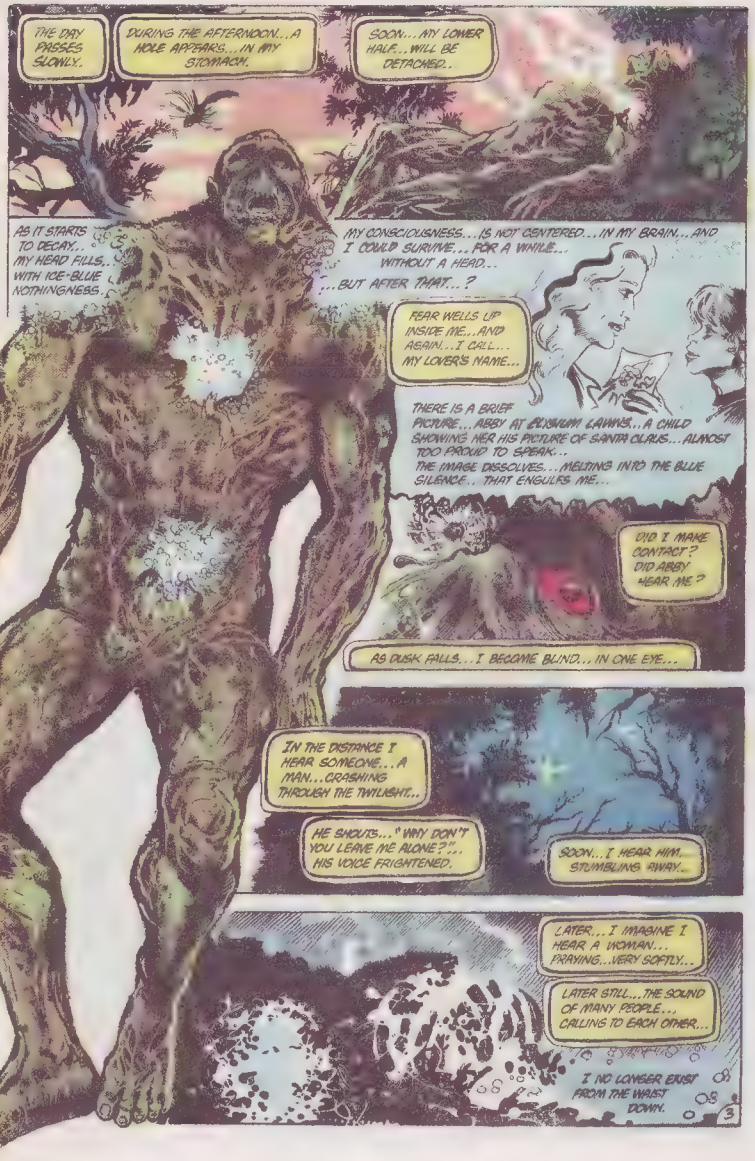


EVENTUALLY...THE POISONOUS CREATURE LEAVES...TO SEARCH FOR MORE...OF THE EFFLUENT...THAT SUSTAINS HIM.

I DO NOT...SEE HIM...AGAIN...

I CANNOT LIFT MY HEAD...FAR ENOUGH...TO SEE THE GRADUALLY DEEPENING HOLE...IN MY CHEST.

BUT I CAN FEEL IT.

A COLD ACHE SURROUNDED BY BLUE NUMBNESS.

THROUGHOUT...THE LONG...PARALYZED NIGHT...MY MIND IS CAUGHT...IN A GAUZE...OF DELERIUM...

I SEE A LANDSCAPE...WHOSE HARD EDGES HAVE ERODED...INTO NEW...AND DISTURBING FORMS..

I THINK OF ABBY...

I LEFT HER SLEEPING...WHEN I CAME HERE...TO THIS PLACE...OF MY DESTRUCTION.

INSIDE MY MIND...I CALL HER NAME...

SHE DOES NOT ANSWER

SHE DOES NOT...COME TO FIND ME...

WITH THE FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN...

...I NOTICE...

...THAT MY ARM HAS GONE.

THE DAY PASSES SLOWLY.

DURING THE AFTERNOON...A HOLE APPEARS...IN MY STOMACH.

SOON...MY LOWER HALF...WILL BE DETACHED..

AS IT STARTS TO DECAY...MY HEAD FILLS...WITH ICE-BLUE NOTHINGNESS.

MY CONSCIOUSNESS...IS NOT CENTERED...IN MY BRAIN...AND I COULD SURVIVE...FOR A WHILE...WITHOUT A HEAD...

...BUT AFTER THAT...?

FEAR WELLS UP INSIDE ME...AND AGAIN...I CALL...MY LOVER'S NAME...

THERE IS A BRIEF PICTURE...ABBY AT ELYSIUM LAWNS...A CHILD SHOWING HER HIS PICTURE OF SANTA CLAUS...ALMOST TOO PROUD TO SPEAK...

THE IMAGE DISSOLVES...MELTING INTO THE BLUE SILENCE...THAT ENGULFS ME...

DID I MAKE CONTACT? DID ABBY HEAR ME?

AS DUSK FALLS...I BECOME BLIND...IN ONE EYE...

IN THE DISTANCE I HEAR SOMEONE...A MAN...CRASHING THROUGH THE TWILIGHT...

HE SHOUTS..."WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE?"...HIS VOICE FRIGHTENED.

SOON...I HEAR HIM...STUMBLING AWAY...

LATER...I IMAGINE I HEAR A WOMAN...PRAYING...VERY SOFTLY...

LATER STILL...THE SOUND OF MANY PEOPLE...CALLING TO EACH OTHER...

I NO LONGER EXIST FROM THE WAIST DOWN.

AND EVENTUALLY...
AAA... BY...?
DON'T... COME... CUH... CLOSER...
POISON...
OH GOD.
OH GOD, YOU'RE STILL ALIVE...
BODY DYING... ALL GONE SOON..
LISTEN... CUH.. CAREFULLY...
CAN'T TALK... MUCK LONGER...
AND THEN I TELL HER... WHAT I PLAN TO DO...
...AND THEN... MY LOWER JAW.. FALLS OFF...
...AND.. AFTER A WHILE...
...I DIE...
CONTINUED ON 2 HP PAGE FOLLOWING

OFFICER BERNHARDT:
... SO, LIKE, I DUNNO WHAT WENT DOWN FOR CERTAIN.
FIRST I HEARD OF IT WAS WIDOW MABEL TELLIN' ME HOW PARSONAL BOB HAD DISAPPEARED...
"SEEMS THEY'D ARGUED THE NIGHT BEFORE. SHE ELUNG BOB OUT. NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN... LEAST, NOT TILL SHE IDENTIFIED HIM THIS MORNIN', BUT THAT WAS LATER...
TIME SA
SALE
"WELL, SHE'S BENDIN' MY EAR. THIS MONTAGE GUY ARRIVES...
"HE'D OVERHEARD WIDOW MABEL'S STORY, AN' IT SEEMED TO UPSET HIM. I ASKED WHY AN' HE SAID SOMETHIN' 'BOUT WINDS BOIN' 'IASSIN' IN PENNSYLVANIA, THEN WALKED OFF...
"LATER, I HEARD HE'D SCARED SOME NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS...
"ANYWAY, HE SEEMED PRETTY WEIRD.
"WHEN HE TURNED UP AT THE STATION LATER ON WITH THAT STORY... HOW SOME MONSTER HAD GOT HIS WIFE AN' WE HADDA FIND HER... I THOUGHT, Y'KNOW, 'UH-OH!'
"BUT THEN SHE TURNED UP... AND THEN LATER WE FOUND BOB..."
... AND NOW I DUNNO WHAT TO THINK.
SAY!
WHO DEALT THIS MESS?
5

WALLACE MONROE:

"TREASURE PLEASE

"PLEASE DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT

"I WANT TO HOLD YOU. I WANT TO MAKE EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, BUT MY LEGS WON'T LET ME. THEY JUST KEEP BACKING AWAY FROM YOU.

"BACKING AWAY ACROSS THE WET MORNING GRASS

"REMEMBER YESTERDAY MORNING, WHEN WE ARRIVED HERE FROM PENNSYLVANIA AFTER DRIVING OVERNIGHT? YOU WERE HOT AND UNCOMFORTABLE. THE BABY WAS KICKING...

"WE STOPPED FOR MILK. OUTSIDE THE STORE, A WOMAN WAS TALKING TO A COP..."

OKAY! SO WE ARGUED! SO I WAS ACCIDENTALLY HOLDING MY NAIL FILE WHEN I SHOVED THE BUM.

LISTEN YOU DON'T CARE HE'S JUST SOME WIND, RIGHT? BUT HE'S GONE MISSIN'! WHAT ABOUT MY BACK RENT?

"IT COULDN'T BE DEREK'S HAD GONE MISSING IN PENNSYLVANIA, BUT I'D PUT THAT VIEW-MARE BEHIND ME. THE COMPANY CLOSED THE DUMP AND MOVED US HERE..."

EXCUSE ME. ?

DID YOU SAY...A DRUNKARD WAS MISSING?

"I WAS STUPID TO SPEAK LIKE THAT IT JUST MADE THE COP SUSPICIOUS

"I WALKED BACK TO THE CAR AND TOLD YOU I'D BEEN ASKING DIRECTIONS, AND YOU BELIEVED ME BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS BELIEVE ME.

"WE DROVE ON AND CHECKED IN TO OUR MOTEL. AND I WENT OUT TO BUY A NEWSPAPER.
"ON THE WAY BACK I SAW SOME CHILDREN PLAYING IN A VACANT LOT. THEY WERE CHANTING SOMETHING..."
NUKEFACE
NUKEFACE
NUKEFACE
"WHERE? WHERE HAD THEY GOT THAT NAME FROM? THAT'S WHAT THE CHILDREN IN PENNSYLVANIA HAD CHANTED... BUT THAT WAS HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY!
"I SHOUTED AT THEM AND MADE A COMPLETE FOOL OF MYSELF.
"BACK AT THE MOTEL I JUST PACED AROUND OR SAT STARING. I MUST HAVE LOOKED CRAZY.
"WAS THERE SOMETHING? SOMETHING THAT CAME OUT OF THE DUMPS IN PENNSYLVANIA AND KILLED DERELICTS? SOMETHING THAT HAD FOLLOWED US HERE?
"NUKEFACE.
"DUSK WAS FALLING. I TOLD YOU I NEEDED TO GO FOR A WALK AND YOU SAID TO GET SOME MORE MILK ON THE WAY BACK.
"I KNEW HE WAS OUT THERE. AND THAT SOMEHOW IT WAS THE COMPANY'S FAULT...ANY FAULT, EVEN. I HAD TO FIND HIM. I HAD TO DO SOMETHING...
"FOR SOME REASON, I DECIDED TO SEARCH THE SWAMPS.

"I GOT LOST.

"I WANDERED AROUND FOR HOURS, GROWING MORE FRIGHTENED AND DESPERATE WITH EACH CRACK OF A BRANCH OR NEARBY SCRABBLING

"AT ONE POINT, I BECAME CONVINCED THAT SOMETHING LURKED NEARBY, LISTENING TO MY EVERY BREATH.

"I YELLED AT THE EMPTY SHADOWS..."

WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE!!

"THERE WAS NO REPLY. I CRASHED THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH AND EVENTUALLY FOUND MY WAY OUT ONTO A ROAD.

"IT TOOK ME ANOTHER HOUR TO LOCATE OUR MOTEL. I'D FORGOTTEN THE STREET NAME.

3197

"AND WHEN I FOUND IT... YOU WEREN'T THERE..

8:30
Gone to look for you and buy milk.
If you get home, stay put.
Treasure
XXX

"THE NOTE SAID EIGHT THIRTY. TWO HOURS BEFORE.

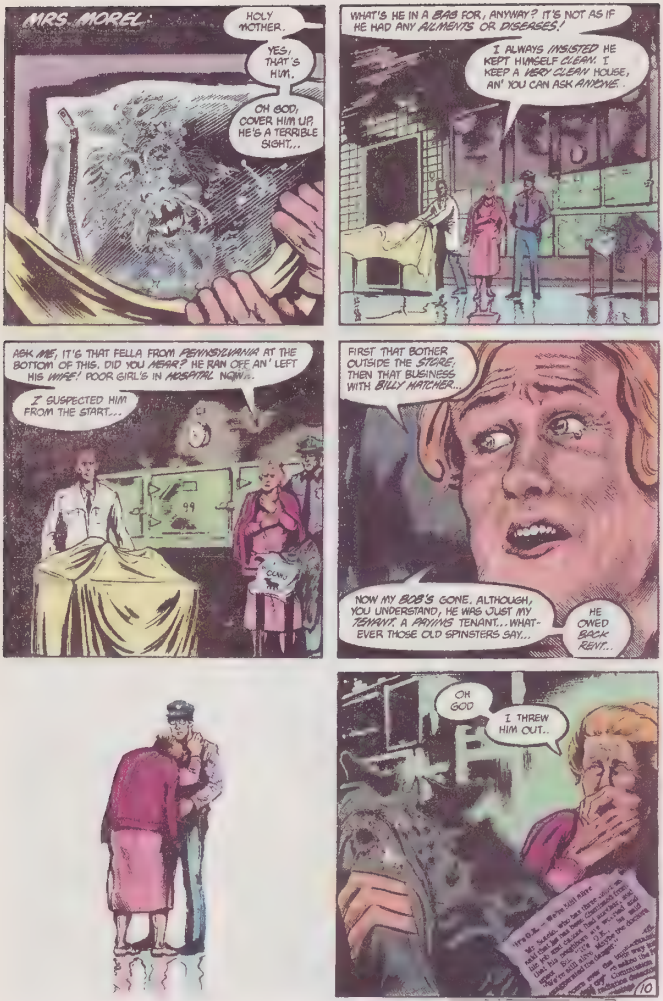
"MY STOMACH FELT LIKE LEAD. YOU WERE PREGNANT, OUT ON YOUR OWN IN A STRANGE NEIGHBORHOOD ... AND THERE WAS A MONSTER OUT THERE.

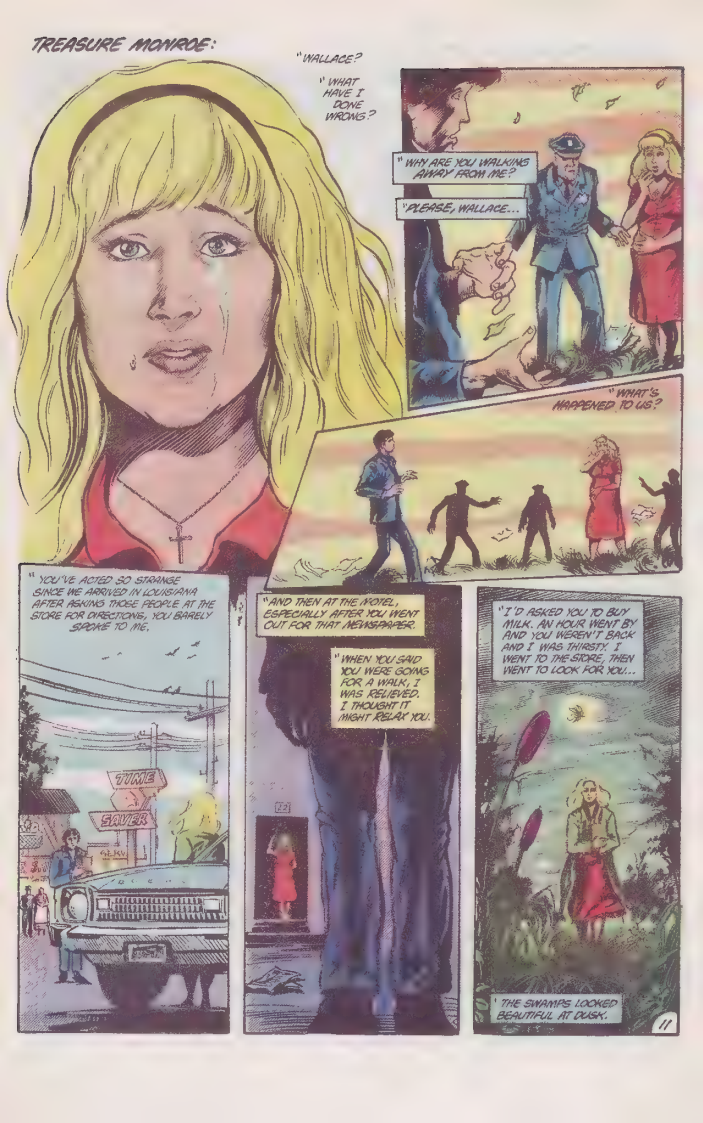
"I NEVER TOLD YOU EXACTLY WHAT THE COMPANY DID. I'D BEEN COVERING UP.. FOR THE COMPANY AND FOR MYSELF. COVERING UP HAD LED ME TO THIS.

8

"WHEN I REACHED THE POLICE STATION, I WAS RAVING.

"I BABBLED TO THE OFFICER I'D MET EARLIER, ABOUT DERELICTS, KIDS, NUCLEAR WASTE, MONSTERS... HE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME.
"FINALLY, I TOLD HIM YOU WERE PREGNANT, AND HE AGREED TO ORGANIZE A SEARCH PARTY.
"WE TRUDGED THROUGH THE DARK SWAMPS CALLING OUT TO EACH OTHER.
"ONE OF THE MEN FOUND SOME PATCHES OF GRASS, LUMINOUS AND CONTAMINATED, AND AFTER THAT THEY DIDN'T LAUGH AT MY STORY SO MUCH..
"... BUT WE DIDN'T FIND YOU. WE SEARCHED UNTIL THE NEXT MORNING, AND THEN FINALLY, WHEN I'D GIVEN UP HOPE...
"... YOU WANDERED OUT OF NOWHERE AND FOUND US.
"JUST FOR A MOMENT I WAS SO HAPPY...
"AND THEN I ASKED YOU WHERE YOU'D BEEN.
"... AND YOU TOLD ME.
"TREASURE, PLEASE.
"PLEASE DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT.
"I CAN NO LONGER BEAR THE SIGHT OF YOUR EYES.
"I TURN, AND I BEGIN TO RUN...
"... KNOWING ALREADY THAT I SHALL NEVER STOP."
9


MRS. MOREL:
HOLY MOTHER.
YES, THAT'S HIM.
OH GOD, COVER HIM UP, HE'S A TERRIBLE SIGHT...
WHAT'S HE IN A BAG FOR, ANYWAY? IT'S NOT AS IF HE HAD ANY AILMENTS OR DISEASES!
I ALWAYS INSISTED HE KEPT HIMSELF CLEAN. I KEEP A VERY CLEAN HOUSE, AN' YOU CAN ASK ANYONE.
ASK ME, IT'S THAT FELLA FROM PENNSYLVANIA AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS. DID YOU HEAR? HE RAN OFF AN' LEFT HIS WIFE! POOR GIRL'S IN HOSPITAL NOW...
I SUSPECTED HIM FROM THE START...
FIRST THAT BOTHER OUTSIDE THE STORE, THEN THAT BUSINESS WITH BILLY HATCHER...
NOW MY BOB'S GONE. ALTHOUGH, YOU UNDERSTAND, HE WAS JUST MY TENANT. A PAYING TENANT... WHATEVER THOSE OLD SPINSTERS SAY...
HE OWED BACK RENT...
OH GOD
I THREW HIM OUT..
10

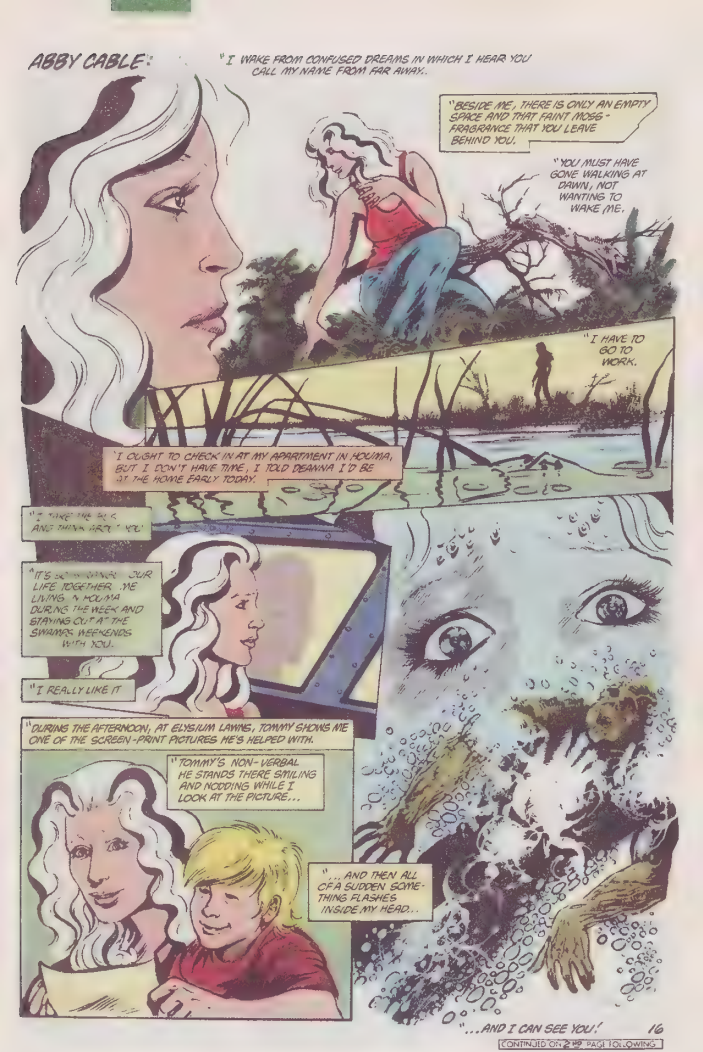

TREASURE MONROE:
"WALLACE?
"WHAT HAVE I DONE WRONG?
"WHY ARE YOU WALKING AWAY FROM ME?
"PLEASE, WALLACE...
"WHAT'S HAPPENED TO US?
"YOU'VE ACTED SO STRANGE SINCE WE ARRIVED IN LOUISIANA AFTER ASKING THOSE PEOPLE AT THE STORE FOR DIRECTIONS, YOU BARELY SPOKE TO ME.
TIME SAVER
"AND THEN AT THE MOTEL, ESPECIALLY AFTER YOU WENT OUT FOR THAT NEWSPAPER.
"WHEN YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING FOR A WALK, I WAS RELIEVED. I THOUGHT IT MIGHT RELAX YOU.
"I'D ASKED YOU TO BUY MILK. AN HOUR WENT BY AND YOU WEREN'T BACK AND I WAS THIRSTY. I WENT TO THE STORE, THEN WENT TO LOOK FOR YOU...
' THE SWAMPS LOOKED BEAUTIFUL AT DUSK.
11

"I GUESS IT WAS STUPID OF ME TO LOOK FOR YOU IN THERE. I'VE NEVER HAD ANY SENSE OF DIRECTION.
"I GOT LOST.
"...DON'T MIND BEING LOST... IT WAS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT. I JUST DIDN'T WANT YOU TO BE WORRIED.
"I DECIDED TO DRINK HALF THE MILK, AND THEN SEARCH AGAIN. THAT WAY, I..."
"THAT WAS WHEN I FOUND HIM.
"I WAS SO STARTLED THAT I DROPPED THE MILK. I REMEMBER THINKING 'OH WELL, IT'S NO USE CRYING OVER SPILLED MILK.' ISN'T THAT SILLY?
"THAT POOR MAN. HE WAS SO SICK.
"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. THEN I SAID 'WELL, WHAT WOULD JESUS CHRIST HAVE DONE?'
"THERE WAS NO QUESTION.
"I PUT MY COAT OVER HIM, THEN LAID DOWN AND TRIED TO KEEP HIM WARM.
HE HAD A SKIN DISEASE... HIS SKIN GLOWED. I HEAR FROM PEOPLE WHO WORKED IN MATCH FACTORIES SUFFER THE SAME COMPLAINT. HE WAS SO UGLY.
"BUT THAT'S WHAT CHRIST TAUGHT, ISN'T IT? TO LOVE THE UNLOVABLE?
12

"BEFORE I WENT TO SLEEP, I SAID A PRAYER FOR HIM, OUT LOUD.
"WHEN I AWOKE IN THE MORNING I LISTENED FOR A HEARTBEAT, BUT I'M CERTAIN HE WAS DEAD.
"IN DAYLIGHT, IT WAS EASY TO FIND MY WAY OUT OF THE SWAMP.
"I RAN STRAIGHT INTO YOU, AND ALL OF THESE COMPLICATIONS...
"YOU LOOKED SO HAPPY TO SEE ME. AND THEN YOU ASKED WHERE I'D BEEN..
"I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE SWAMP. AND IT WAS AS IF EVERYTHING TURNED COLD ALL OF A SUDDEN..
Y-YOU LAY NEXT TO HIM? ALL NIGHT? AND HE WAS GLOWING?
YES... HE WAS ILL, WALLACE, WHAT'S WRONG?
OH JEEZ... THOSE FOOTPRINTS WE FOUND...
NOTHING NOTHING'S WRONG.
YOU... YOU JUST STAY THERE, TREASURE. EVERYTHING'S OKAY. WE'LL FIND A DOCTOR...
DOCTOR? WALLACE... WALLACE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
WUH-WHAT'S WRONG WITH EVERYBODY? I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING...
WHY WON'T ANYBODY COME NUH-NEAR ME?
13

WALLACE?
WHAT HAVE I DONE WRONG??
nuclear official quits

BILLY HATCHER:
LISTEN, PAY NO ATTENTION TO WHAT EDDIE SAID. THAT GUY CAN BE A REAL HOMO AT TIMES.
THIS IS WHAT REALLY HAPPENED, AN' YOU CAN CUT MY BLEEDIN' HEART OUT IF I TELL A LIE...
"FIRST THING YESTERDAY MORNING, RIGHT, I'D BEEN FISHIN' OUT IN THE SWAMPS, I SEES THIS GUY...
"HE'S A REAL MUTANT, Y KNOW? ZITS, AND BITS O' STUFF FALLIN' OFF HIS FACE AN' EVERYTHIN'..
"I YELL 'NUKEFACE AT HIM, CAUSE, LIKE, THAT WAS THE NAME I THOUGHT UP, AN' THEN I SPLIT!
"THAT'S WHAT GAVE ME THE IDEA FOR THIS MASK, SEE?
"ANYWAY, LATER, WHEN WE WAS PLAYIN'... YOU WERE THERE, PANTO... THIS CRAZY GUY COMES UP AN' STARTS SHOUTIN' AT US.
"THIS ISN'T PENNSYLVANIA! THOSE DUMPS WERE SAFE!" ALL KINDA CRAZY STUFF...
"WE BEAT IT."
LATER, MIKE BERNHARDT'S BROTHER TOLD ME THE REST...
THIS MONROE, THE CRAZY GUY, HE LEFT TOWN. IT'S BECAUSE HIS WIFE WENT OUT WITH NUKEFACE, Y'KNOW. IN THE WOODS, AN' NOW SHE'S GONNA HAVE A SCREWED-UP BABY!
THIS MONWAY TOWN'S WIFE WHO'S IN HOSPITAL NOW, SHE SAYS THAT WHEN SHE LEFT OL NUKEFACE, THERE IN THE SWAMPS, HE WAS DEAD..
BUT JOEY BERNHARDT SAYS HIS BROTHER AIN'T FOUND THE BODY YET...
Uranium Shipment We
...SO WHO KNOWS?
15


ABBY CABLE:
"I WAKE FROM CONFUSED DREAMS IN WHICH I HEAR YOU CALL MY NAME FROM FAR AWAY..
"BESIDE ME, THERE IS ONLY AN EMPTY SPACE AND THAT FAINT MOSS-FRAGRANCE THAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND YOU.
"YOU MUST HAVE GONE WALKING AT DAWN, NOT WANTING TO WAKE ME.
"I HAVE TO GO TO WORK.
"I OUGHT TO CHECK IN AT MY APARTMENT IN HOUMA, BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME. I TOLD DEANNA I'D BE AT THE HOUSE EARLY TODAY.
"I TAKE THE BUS AND THINK ABOUT YOU.
"IT'S STRANGE... OUR LIFE TOGETHER. ME LIVING IN HOUMA DURING THE WEEK AND STAYING OUT AT THE SWAMP ON WEEKENDS WITH YOU.
"I REALLY LIKE IT
"DURING THE AFTERNOON, AT ELYSIUM LAWNS, TOMMY SHOWS ME ONE OF THE SCREEN-PRINT PICTURES HE'S HELPED WITH.
"TOMMY'S NON-VERBAL HE STANDS THERE SMILING AND NODDING WHILE I LOOK AT THE PICTURE...
"...AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN SOMETHING FLASHES INSIDE MY HEAD...
"...AND I CAN SEE YOU!'

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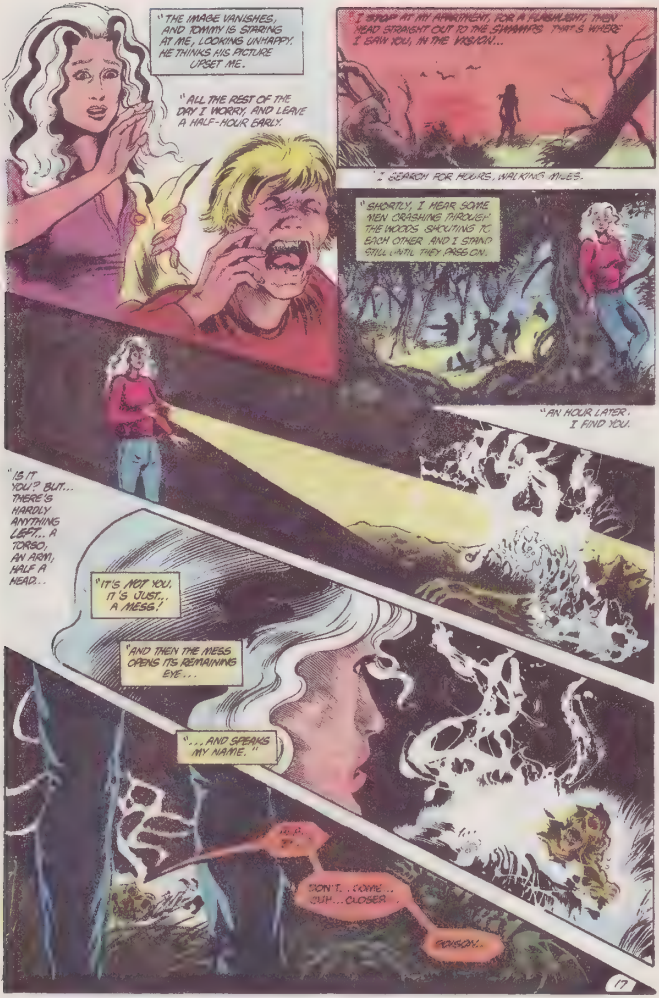
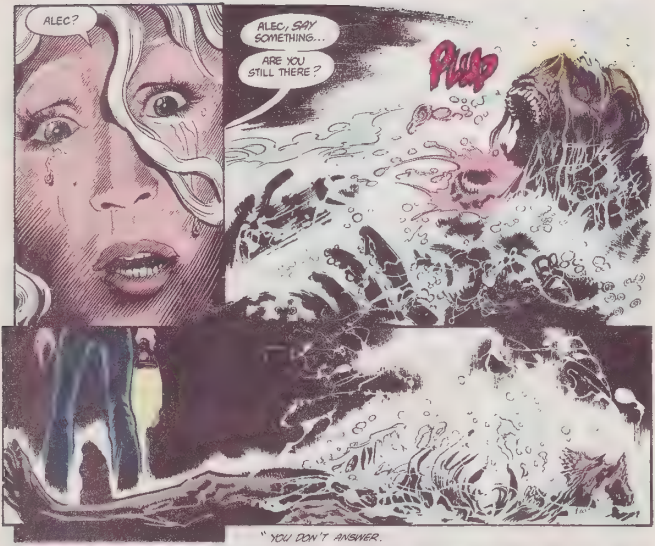
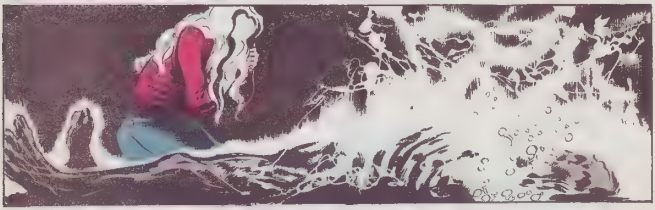

"THE IMAGE VANISHES, AND TOMMY IS STARING AT ME, LOOKING UNHAPPY. HE THINKS HIS PICTURE UPSET ME.
"ALL THE REST OF THE DAY I WORRY, AND LEAVE A HALF-HOUR EARLY.
I STOP AT MY APARTMENT, FOR A FLASHLIGHT, THEN HEAD STRAIGHT OUT TO THE SWAMPS. THAT'S WHERE I SAW YOU, IN THE VISION...
I SEARCH FOR HOURS, WALKING MILES.
"SHORTLY, I HEAR SOME MEN CRASHING THROUGH THE WOODS, SHOUTING TO EACH OTHER. AND I STAND STILL UNTIL THEY PASS ON.
"AN HOUR LATER, I FIND YOU.
"IS IT YOU? BUT... THERE'S HARDLY ANYTHING LEFT... A TORSO, AN ARM, HALF A HEAD...
"IT'S NOT YOU. IT IS JUST A MESS."
"AND THEN THE MESS OPENS ITS REMAINING EYE...
"... AND SPEAKS MY NAME."
H-P...
DON'T... COME... CUH... CLOSER...
POISON...

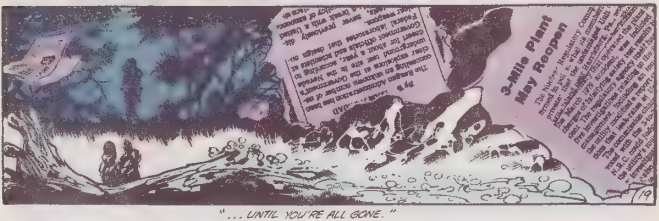
OH GOD
OH GOD YOU'RE STILL ALIVE..
PLUP
BODY DYING.. ALL GONE SOON
LISTEN.. CUH.. CAREFULLY
CAN'T TALK.. MUCH LONGER..
I'M SUH.. GOING TO TRY.. TO LEAVE MY BODY.
SEND.. MY MIND.. OUT INTO THE BREEZE..
BUT... YOUR BODY! IT'S JUST FALLING APART! YOU WON'T HAVE A BODY TO COME BACK TO...
OH, ALEC, WHAT DID THIS TO YOU...?
NO TIME.. TO EXPLAIN YUH
THIS BUH.. BUH WILL.. DIE.
I'M GOING.. TO TRY.. TO BUILD.. A NEW BODY
IF.. IT WORKS.. I'LL SEE YOU SUH SOON..
I LOVE YOU, ABBY..
18



"YOU DON'T ANSWER.



"I STAND THERE AMONGST THE MUTE AND HORRIFIED TREES, AND I WATCH YOU...



"...UNTIL YOU'RE ALL GONE."

MUKIFACE:
GZUH?
OAW...
OAW, MY HEAD..
MUSTA BIN SOME KINDA PARTY.
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED ANYWAY? HUH?
I 'MEMBER, I'D JUST FOUND THAT BIG MUD-PUDDLE WHERE
...WHERE THEY'D BURIED.
"AW, NO, I REMEMBER
"THEY'D BURIED THE STUFF! BURIED IT UNDER THE MUD WHERE I COULDN'T GET TO IT!
"AW, GODDAMMIT
"AN'... AN' THERE WAS THAT GUY ED WHATZISNAME...
"HE WAS GONNA HELP ME DIG IT UP, BUT THEN HE JUST LAY THERE...
"THAT BIG BASTUD. AFTER I GIVE HIM MY LAST SHOT O' JUICE!
20

"I COULD SEE HE WEREN'T GONNA BE NO HELP SO I WENT OFF TO LOOK FOR THE STUFF SOMEPLACE ELSE..

"DIDN'T FIND NONE

"OH YEAH, AN' IF I DIDN'T GOT ENOUGH TROUBLE, I GET SOME ROTTEN LITTLE KID SHOUTIN' AT ME, LIKE THEY USED TO DO BACK IN PENNSYLVANIA.

"WHO NEEDS IT?

"BOY, I WAS HURTIN' SOMETHIN' AWFUL...

"NEEDED A TASTE SO BAD, IT WAS CHEWIN' UP MY INSIDES. MAN, I TELLYA, ONE DAY I'M GONNA QUIT THIS STUFF.

"I MUSTA WANDERED ROUND ALL DAY THE PAIN JUST GETTIN' WORSE THEN I GUESS I COLLAPSED..

"WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

"IT WAS FUNNY.. SOMETIMES I KNEW I WAS IN THE SWAMP THERE, BUT SOMETIMES I THOUGHT I WAS BACK IN BLOSSOMVILLE...

"I WAS IN THE SHANTY TOWN OUT THERE, AN'!.. JEEZ! I JUST REMEMBERED! THEY WERE ALL THERE! ALL MY OLD DRINKIN' BUDDIES WERE THERE!

"..BUT NONE OF 'EM WOULD TALK TO ME.

"FUNNY...

"AND.. AN' I DREAMED ABOUT A WOMAN...
"SHE WAS LIKE.. LIKE MY MOM SHE COVERED ME UP, AND SHE MUSSED ME, AND SHE SAID A PRAYER FOR ME."
GEE...
GEE, THAT WAS, Y'KNOW...
THAT WAS A NICE DREAM.
SMACK
WELL, NO SENSE SITTIN' 'ROUND MOPIN'. GOTTA FIND ME SOME MORE STRAY. THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME MORE OF IT OUT THERE SOMEPLACE...LOTS OF IT...
HELL, I CAN SMELL IT, JUST NEEDS PERSEVERANCE AN' DETERMINATION...
PLOP!
DON'T CARE IF I GOTTA LOOK IN EVERY STATE, EVERY TOWN, EVERY STREET, DAMMIT!
IT'S THERE, BOY. I KNOW IT'S THERE...
PERSEVERANCE AN' DETERMINATION, THAT'S ALL IT TAKES...
HEADS UP, AMERICA...

CONCLUDED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

e unexpected that we're
to be ready for. And we
– that's all," he said.

Near the schools

son not
e easy
y and
is no
place
ing the
month
– I'm tired, he had cancer and his wife died of
for stomach cancer. Carl across the street died of
ad. throat cancer and Ernie died of it and his wife
If he has it now. The beer vet to them died of leu
d ferents, and my sister across the way there, she
I," McPherson said
ve a school ought to be
a lot more than it is.
Yankee says they'll know if
r radiation) gets out. But
ad about them finding a
e powder on the ground
that they didn't at first
re it came from
by the
24 ho. two of my brothers my father and my son
tion (6
as fa

it in down there because it
rrounded play and later
r past chief of police, said
even use it down there at
."

son also thinks Hinsdale
fled fast enough when a
y serious situation develops
nd Yankee. He said Hin-
arently
after my sister-in-law, my mother-in-law, my grand-
in died mother, and my wife
as born.
emergency drill a: Yankee,
an actual alert two months
e Vernon plant, he said.
n said Hinsdale is notified
the chief alerts
ods. two of my aunts.
years two of my doctors.

Long.

ld like
ns to the.
ything happens — instead
nt Yankee's notifying state
New Hampshire, t
he message to r
ters in Cor
relaying the
Mutual Aid Ar
ld notifying V

was worse than thought

MIDDLETOWN, Pa — The core of Three Mile Island 2 reactor came closer to melting down than officially estimated during the 1979 accident, a study by Tuesday reported. The new study, done by EG&G, for the federal government, said temperatures in the core reached at least 4,500 degrees, only 200 degrees below the melting point, and the surface of some uranium began to melt.

Previous studies put the temperature at 3,500 degrees.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission on Tuesday ordered Metropolitan Edison Co., which operates the facility, to begin the process of decommissioning the reactor by December 1988.

The NRC said the new study underscores the inadequacy system at Three Mile Island and that the reactor should not be restarted before allowing it to restart, possibly next year.

d –
n not
ne
ne

Avenue and Linden Boulevard, one was in Queens, the Edgemere landfill at Beach 56th Street and Rockaway Parkway, and 34 were in the Bronx or New York City landfill, which is on the Staten Island Bay, is owned by the Sanitation Department. It is operated by Waste Services and receives 9,000 tons of garbage a day. In addition, the Department oversees 1974 and 1979 contracts under which thousand gallons of hazardous wastes were dumped there illegally.

The Queens landfill covers 173 acres and is owned and operated by the Sanitation Department. Inspectors found 500 types of garbage a day. Hazardous wastes were dumped there illegally as well, the environmental department said. In addition, in March 1983, more than 1,000 gallons of organic chemicals were dumped there in the dump

Irma Thomas, St. George, Utah

Verla's dad, and Paul Stewart, and Dan Foster

and my husband Kent –

Jane Bradshaw Hilton, New

sirens

They are designed to cover the whole

questio

have pe

It seeks to find out information

Loss Blood, Cedar City, Utah

Elmer Pickett, St. George, Utah

explained the situation from Yankee's viewpoint.

"Our options are limited. What we want to do is get the information out to the appropriate state agencies as

prepared message that they're familiar with, and then they relay it through the appropriate channels in

notified

Jazardous-Waste

gear up" for the cleanup, which it called "an enormous construction project" that would last at least 10 years and more probably

waste, as far as it believes Mc- first year of Dr. Vern Vernon collected only $10 million

Yankee

cross the Cons

civil defe
, thinks u
ld for a serio

, the nuclear facility

First would see a flash of light, it'd light this old carry-
whole house up. Then you'd hear the blast and the house
then you'd see the mushroom it was really
something. We used to let the kids out in their
ashmobiles to get

Roma Lundberg, St. George, Utah

in an
d come do
as a usual
. They tel

The state could take over the cleanup, including site inspections, bringing the total state contribution to $500 million.

However, the amount of money in the

The ones who died got off easy. It's the ones who
believed that have it hard.

Vonda McKinney, Holbrook, Ariz.

Fed
fro

ate

NO ILLNESS FOUND IN DIOXIN TESTING

Doct
Expl

Accord
Times-Sentinel. But the principal told me I had to
Later he died of cancer. So did many of my
dents. So did the other physics teacher

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tests on people exposed to dioxin in western Missouri showed no "measurable ill-health effects," health officials say, but many residents are still skeptical.

Dr. Henry Falk of the Federal Center for Disease Control said at a meeting Saturday in Sedalia that a group of residents Sunday, "We've not to find any increase in clinical illnesses or

tests of such markers in blood, hospital, he and Dr. H. Dennis Jr., the co-director of the state's division of physical sciences, said of 194 people from Times Beach. Those residents were selected from 800 residents who responded to questionnaires circulated by the state health department and the Centers for Disease Control.

Dr. Donnell said that in light of

I was a teacher in Pangulten in '51 when the
blasting started. One day after
my turn to take my phys ed class out on the
field, and I didn't want to because I'd read about
my father, who was a

Later he died of cancer. So did many of my
dents. So did the other physics teacher

Dr. Cleanor Hinds
a de
plant in Stillwater. His
Hinds, and the chemi
with waste oil and spr
control measures in the

Residents Not

Lin Sproull of Times
officials that a group
lungs was not satisfied

"A number of dogs a
the area died," s
small birds and things
place," she said. "We
health study of our ow
to say we should

The resident fin
solved the sheriff's
neighbor, Miss

ed by Water Bu

ERY, Va., Oct. 17 (AP)
e at the Virginia Ele
Company's nuclear pow
hen he was struck by pie
that turned into steam
from a ruptured steam
officials said.

adioactivity was release
accident Saturday in the pla
ondary water system, which
some of the water in the unit
generators, Rodney Smith, a
man for the utility, said

The expansion joint ruptur
Wayne C. Jones, 33 years old, o
tion, was performing routine
nance on the water system, M
said the rupture released 300
pressurized water that turned
and knocked Mr. Jones 10 f
Smith said

He said the plant continued o
because the rupture occurred
of the secondary system that
free the steam flow, rather tha
vital part of the system

In July 1972, two employee
Surry plant became the first
the country to die in an accident
clear power plant, according
eral officials after a steam r
functioned, spraying them wi
heated steam

Cruel Cover-Up?

on Job Poisons

nd funds are made "
ing the questions, she said, were
ntuated cost of notification, the
ht emotional damage of notifying
n when no solution might be
ble and the possibility that work-
said sue their employers
Hanks cited a 1980 pilot program
ch the occupational health insti-
ompiled to notify chemical plant
s in Augusta of increased risk of
r cancer from exposure to a po-
rcinogen, beta-naphthylamine.
it make any difference that
e 1980 Augusta pilot notified
en, more than $300 million in
claims have reportedly
ainst the companies involv

Dr. C
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SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE

37
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U.K. 35p
JUNE 85

SWAMP THING

1935 DC 50 1985

BY ALAN MOORE RICK VEITCH & JOHN TOTLEBEN

DAY 1

"DEANNA'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU, AB."

I MEAN, I KNOW WHAT WITH YOUR HUSBAND'S *ACCIDENT* AND ALL IT'S BEEN PRETTY *ROUGH*, BUT...

WELL, IF WE CAN *HELP* OR ANYTHING...

I'M OKAY, TIM... I'M JUST A BIT WORRIED *MYSELF* RIGHT NOW.

I, UM, GOT THIS *FRIEND* WHO'S SORT OF ON *VACATION* AN' I JUST, Y'KNOW, HOPE THEY GET *BACK* OKAY AND EVERYTHING.

ANY MORE CARROTS THERE?

NOPE.

ALL THE VEGETABLES ARE *GONE*...

SWAMP THING

ORIGINALLY BOTTLED BY WEIN & WRIGHTSON

GROWTH & PATTERNS

ALAN MOORE WRITER . RICK VEITCH & JOHN TOTLEBEN ARTISTS . KAREN BERGER EDITOR . TATJANA WOOD COLORIST . JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER

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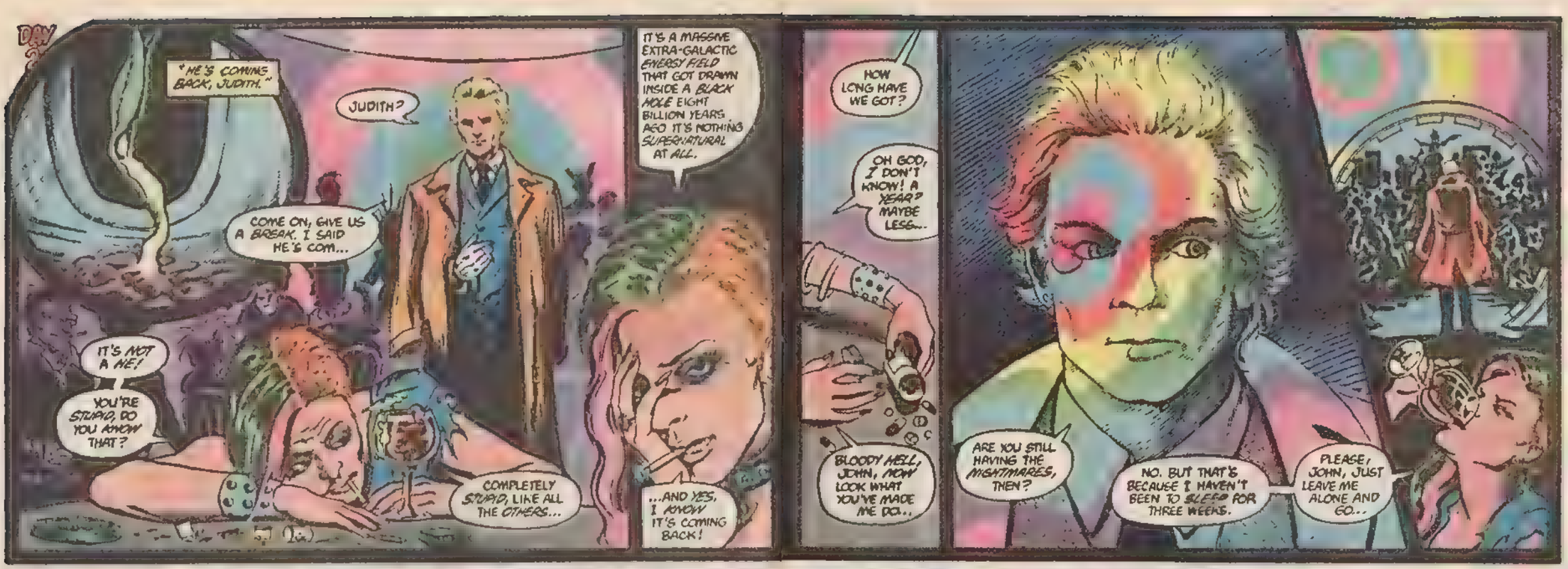
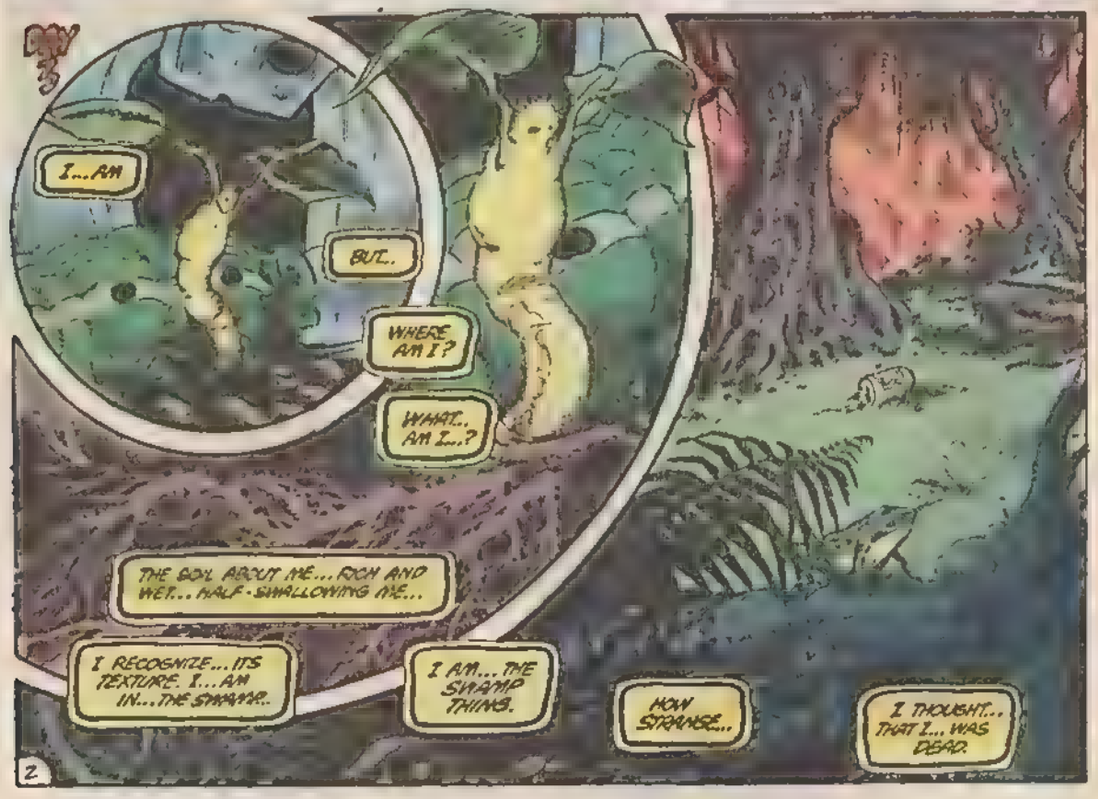
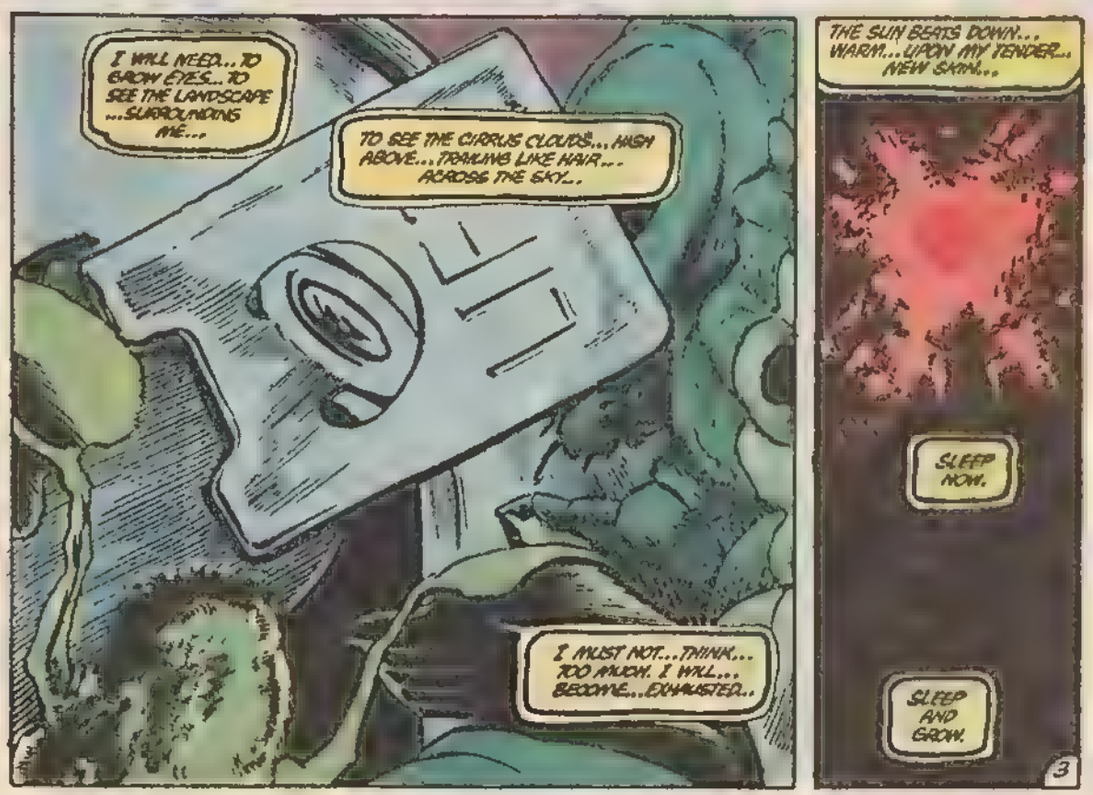

DAY 2
"HE'S COMING BACK, JUDITH."
JUDITH?
IT'S A MASSIVE EXTRA-GALACTIC ENERGY FIELD THAT GOT DRAWN INSIDE A BLACK HOLE EIGHT BILLION YEARS AGO. IT'S NOTHING SUPERNATURAL AT ALL.
COME ON, GIVE US A BREAK. I SAID HE'S COM...
IT'S NOT A HE!
YOU'RE STUPID, DO YOU KNOW THAT?
COMPLETELY STUPID, LIKE ALL THE OTHERS...
...AND YES, I KNOW IT'S COMING BACK!
HOW LONG HAVE WE GOT?
OH GOD, I DON'T KNOW! A YEAR? MAYBE LESS...
BLOODY HELL, JOHN, NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE MADE ME DO..
ARE YOU STILL HAVING THE NIGHTMARES, THEN?
NO. BUT THAT'S BECAUSE I HAVEN'T BEEN TO SLEEP FOR THREE WEEKS.
PLEASE, JOHN, JUST LEAVE ME ALONE AND GO...


DAY 3
I...AM
BUT..
WHERE AM I?
WHAT.. AM I...?
THE GOO ABOUT ME... ROCH AND WET... HALF-SWALLOWING ME..
I RECOGNIZE... ITS TEXTURE. I... AM IN... THE SWAMP.
I AM... THE SWAMP THING.
HOW STRANGE..
I THOUGHT... THAT I... WAS DEAD.
2


I WILL NEED... TO GROW EYES... TO SEE THE LANDSCAPE ...SURROUNDING ME...
TO SEE THE CIRRUS CLOUDS... HIGH ABOVE... TRAILING LIKE HAIR... ACROSS THE SKY..
I MUST NOT... THINK... TOO MUCH. I WILL... BECOME... EXHAUSTED..
THE SUN BEATS DOWN... WARM... UPON MY TENDER... NEW SKIN...
SLEEP NOW.
SLEEP AND GROW.
3

DAY 4

ALEC?

ALEC, ARE YOU AROUND HERE SOMEPLACE?

I KEEP GETTING *FEELINGS* LIKE YOU'RE SOMEWHERE *NEAR* ME, BUT... I DUNNO. MAYBE I'M JUST...

...IMAGINING...

UH...?

HELLO?

CONTINUED ON 38 AND ONWARDS

DAY 5

"JOHN CUH-CONSTANTINE?

"CUH-COME IN. PUH-PLEASE CUH-CUH-COME IN..."

I'M SORRY ABAH ABAH ABOUT ALL THE MUH-MESS. I DUH-DON'T LET MUH-MOTHER COME IN HERE TO CUH CLEAN...

WUH-WHEN DID YOU GET IN FUH-FROM LONDON?

YESTERDAY.

JUDITH'S CRACKING. HAVING NIGHTMARES...

MUH-NOT ABOUT A LITTLE BOY WITH HIS MUH-HEAD TWISTED AROUND BUH-BACKWARDS?

SHE DIDN'T SAY.

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND OUT, BENJAMIN?

HE'S CUH-COMING BACK.

GREAT CHU-CTHULHU! WHO SUH-SLEEPS AT R'LYEH... JUST LIKE IN THE BUH-BOOKS OF H.P. LUH-LOVE-CRAFT. EVERYONE THUH-THINKS LOVECRAFT MUH-MADE CTHULHU UP..

...BUH-BUT I KNOW.

SO HOW LONG HAVE WE GOT?

BEFORE HE WUH-WAKES UP? ABOUT TUH-TWELVE MONTHS, ACCORDING TO MY CHUH-CHARTS, AND THEN AFTER THUH-THAT...

UH...WUH-WELL...

A-ACTUALLY, THERE ISN'T ANYTHING AFTER THAT.

SHUH-SHALL I GET MUH-MOTHER TO MAKE US SOME CUH-COFFEE?

DAY 6

BEADS OF WATER.. BURST AGAINST MY SKIN . LIKE LARGE... AND DELICATE... BALLOONS...

SHE SHOULD WATER... THE SOIL.. AND NOT ME...

IF THE DROPLETS... MAGNIFY... THE SUNLIGHT... I SHALL BURN...

STILL... SHE IS GENTLE... AND LOVING..

TURNING ME... OVER... IN HER HANDS...

PERHAPS CHECKING ...FOR INSECT DAMAGE.

YESTERDAY... APHIDS GNAWED AT ME.. IT WAS... UNPLEASANT...

WHAT .. IS ABBY... DOING NOW?

INSECTICIDE...

IT STINGS...

I WISH... THAT I COULD TELL HER... NOT TO USE IT...

IF MY EYES... HAD BEEN FORMED... SHE MIGHT... HAVE DAMAGED THEM...

PERHAPS .. I SHOULD CONCENTRATE.. ON DEVELOPING.. VOCAL... APPARATUS.

...SO THAT... I CAN TELL HER... WHERE SHE IS GOING... WRONG.

AWW NO! IS THAT A MOLE?

YOU'VE GOT SOME SORT OF GALL THAT'S EATEN ITS WAY IN THERE OR SOMETHING?

I WISH I KNEW MORE ABOUT PLANTS, AND ABOUT HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOU

MAYBE IF I GAVE YOU ANOTHER SQUIRT OF INSECTI-CIDE, THAT WOULD..

AABBEEEE

UH... ALEC?

WAS THAT YOU?

THAT LITTLE SQUEAKY SOUND?

NO MORE BUGS.

STINKS.

OH?

WELL, PARDON ME.

HOW ABOUT "THANKS FOR ALL THE WATER"?

DAY 8
"IT'S GOOD FOR YOU TO SEE ME, SISTER."
NOT AT ALL, MR. CONSTANTINE.
IN TIMES OF TROUBLE, WE MUST ALL OF US DO WHAT WE CAN.
YOU KNOW HE'S COMING BACK, I TAKE IT?
YEAH, WELL, I HAD GATHERED THAT IMPRESSION, YEAH.
THING IS, NOBODY SEEMS TO KNOW WHO'S COMING BACK, OR FROM WHERE.
JUDITH SAYS IT'S A SCIENTIFIC FORCE. BENJAMIN COX SAYS IT'S A PRIMEVAL MONSTER.
ALL THEY AGREE ON IS THAT WE'VE GOT ABOUT TWELVE MONTHS.
HMM. LESS, I'D SAY...
SATAN, MR. CONSTANTINE.
THE NAME OF OUR ADVERSARY IS SATAN.
...AND HE'S COMING BACK.
8

DAY 9

GOOD MORNING.

LISTEN, I CAN'T STAY TOO LONG TODAY. I HAVE TO GET UP TO THE *HOME*.

HEY, WHAT'RE THOSE SPLOTCHES OF *RED STUFF* UP HERE? THEY LOOK KINDA LIKE...

...EYES?

NOT. . WELL .

BUT YES... I...CAN SEE.. YOU...

YOU ..LOOK... BEAUTIFUL...

ABBY?

WHAT. IS WRONG?

ARE YOU. CRYING?

ALEC...CAN *YOU SEE ME?*

NO, I... I'M *SORRY*, IT'S...

OH GOD, I'M SORRY, I'LL SHUT UP IN A SECOND, REALLY...

IT'S JUST YOUR *VOICE*. YOU SOUND LIKE... *HAHAHAHA*... YOU SUH- SOUND LIKE *JIMINY CRICKET*

HAHAHAHA

hee hee hee

...AND SO I JUST SAT AND WATCHED UNTIL YOU WERE ALL EATEN AWAY INTO THIS HORRIBLE BLUE SLIME

I WAS SCARED. YOU TOOK SO MANY WEEKS TO COME BACK

I WASN'T SURE YOU'D MAKE IT

NEITHER .WAS I.. I HAD NEVER . ATTEMPTED RESSURECTY BEFORE . NEVER .. NEEDED TO .

UNTIL . I WAS POSSESSED.. BY THAT TERRIBLE PRESENCE.

I HEARD THAT HE DIED.

ALSO, A RUMOR WENT ROUND ELYSIUM LAWNS ABOUT THIS PREGNANT WOMAN AT THE HOSPITAL. THAT WAS CONNECTED SOMEHOW, BUT IT'S ALL SO CONFUSED..

WHAT BECAME OF HIM ?

HOW LONG WILL YOU BE ROOTED HERE?

OH...NO REASON.

PERHAPS ANOTHER WEEK?

I AM NOT CERTAIN THIS IS ALL SO NEW.

WHY DO YOU ASK ?

ABBY..?

WHAT.. ?

DAY 11

"YOU'RE FINALLY AWAKE, THEN?"

YOU WERE SO SHATTERED WHEN YOU ARRIVED LAST NIGHT I THOUGHT I'D LET YOU SLEEP AND SAVE THE QUESTIONS FOR LATER.

I GUESS THE SITUATION'S PRETTY BAD, NUH?

ABSOLUTELY BLOODY DISMAL.

THEY'RE ALL GOING CRACKERS, Y'KNOW. EXCEPT BENJAMIN. HE WAS CRACKERS TO START WITH. I SUPPOSE IT'LL ALL BE LEFT UP TO ME IN THE END...

BLOODY AMERICANS. ALL MOUTH AND TROUSERS.

BIGOT.

WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS HOW THESE SOUTH AMERICAN PEOPLE INTEND TO BRING HIM BACK.

TO GENERATE THE ENERGY NECESSARY FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, THEY'D HAVE TO INCREASE THE BELIEF-LEVELS OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION!

YEAH, WELL THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE GOING TO DO, ISN'T IT? IT'S OBVIOUS.

THEY'LL USE ALL THE CLASSIC FRIGHTENERS... WEREWOLVES, VAMPIRES, HAUNTED HOUSES, DREAMS...

YEAH? WELL, THEY NEEDN'T BOTHER SENDING ME ANY NIGHTMARES.

WITH ME IT'D BE LIKE SENDING COALS TO NEWCASTLE.

DAY 12

I... AWAKEN...

I AM STRIPED... BY THE SHADOWS... OF LATE AFTERNOON. ABBY.. WILL BE HERE... SOON...

SHE IS... REMARKABLE...

ADAPTING... SO QUICKLY.. TO A SITUATION.. EVEN I.. AM ONLY STARTING... TO COMPREHEND..

I HAVE... REGENERATED... USING PLANT TISSUE... UNTOUCHED.. BY THE BIO... RESTORATIVE FORMULA...

I DO NOT... NEED IT... ANYMORE...

I AM LEARNING... SO MUCH.. ABOUT WHAT I AM... AND THE KNOWLEDGE... IS GRADUALLY.. CONSUMING ME...

BUT WHAT... IS IT CHANGING.. ME INTO?

WHAT... AM I... BECOMING?

I BIDE MY TIME... IN THIS PLACE... UNTIL I AM GROWN...

...AND I CONSIDER... THIS ORGANISM... THAT I AM.

SOMETIMES... I AM IN AWE... AT ITS STRANGENESS... AND COMPLEXITY..

SOMETIMES... I AM ALMOST FRIGHTENED..

... BY MY OWN POSSIBILITIES.

DAY 13

"EMMA, LISTEN IT'S NO GOOD SITTING AROUND AND F'DGE'ING. I'VE GOT TO GO."

"LOUISIANA'S A LONG DRIVE, JOHN WHY DON'T YOU WAIT 'TILL MORNING? HEY, C'MON..."

"EMMA, WILL YOU BLOODY LEAVE IT OUT? I'VE GOT TO BE THERE BY TOMORROW MORNING."

"HMMM Y'KNOW, I'M STARTING TO THINK MY DAD WAS RIGHT! DID I TELL YOU WHAT HE SAID ABOUT ENGLISHMEN?"

"YES YOU DID. NO WE'RE NOT. AND IF I EVER MEET YOUR DAD I'M GOING TO OWN HIM PASS ME THOSE SHOTS."

"GET 'EM YOURSELF. LOOK, WHAT HAVE THEY GOT IN LOUISIANA THAT WE DON'T HAVE IN NEW YORK?"

"ALL RIGHT ALL RIGHT, EMMA, YOU ASKED FOR IT...

"YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHY I'M GOING TO LOUISIANA?

"WELL, ALL RIGHT I'LL TELL YOU

"YOU SEE, THERE'S THIS WOMAN..."

MORNING, MS. CABLE

HOW'S THE BOYFRIEND?

ABBY..?

WHO..?

I...I DON'T KNOW. HE KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOU, AND ME. HE SAID..

YOU DARE... TO THREATEN.. HER?

I SAID I'D TELL THE PEOPLE YOUR MISSUS WORKS FOR ABOUT HER SLEEPING ARRANGEMENT.

I'M A NASTY PIECE OF WORK, CHIEF. ASK ANYBODY.

LOOK, LET'S NOT HAVE ANY AGGRAVATION, EH?

MY NAME'S JOHN CONSTANTINE, AND I THINK WE COULD DO EACH OTHER A FAVOR.

MIND IF I SMOKE?

YES.

THAT'S RIGHT. AND SINCE FOR THE NEXT FOUR DAYS YOU'RE GOING TO BE ABOUT AS DANGEROUS AS A TURNIP, THERE'S NOT MUCH YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

HOW... COULD YOU.. HELP ME?

BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE, MATE...

...AND YOU DON'T.

THE LEARNING WAS SLOW.. AND PAINFUL...

BUT I .. KNOW, WHAT I... AM!

COBBLERS. YOU'RE NOT SMART ENOUGH. LOOK AT HOW LONG IT'S TAKEN YOU TO REALIZE YOU CAN RE-GROW YOURSELF.

AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T WORKED OUT THE NEXT STEP...

NEXT... STEP...?

LOOK, WHAT DO YOU WANT, EH? AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL? IT'S COBWORLD...

THE NEXT STEP IS FIGURING OUT THAT IF YOU CAN REGROW HERE THEN YOU CAN REGROW ANY-WHERE!

ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD!

TRANSPORT! INSTANT TRANSPORT! YOU LET YOUR BODY DIE IN ONE PLACE, YOU REGROW IT IN ANOTHER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTRY.

YOU MUST THINK SLOWER THAN YOU TALK

WHY DO I BOTHER? EH? LOOK AT YOU...

LAST PLANT ELEMENTAL IN THE ENTIRE BLOODY WORLD AND YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IT!

EYUNA WAS RIGHT. IT WAS A WASTE OF TIME COMING HERE..

WHY... WOULD I... WISH TO...?

"I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN NEW YORK."

WELL, IT'S BEEN NICE MEETING YOU, BUT I CAN SEE I'VE MADE A MISTAKE.

OF COURSE, YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU'VE MADE A MORSE MISTAKE...

"BUT THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM."

CONSPIRATIVE... WHAT...

LET HIM GO, ALEC. HE'S TRYING TO LEAD YOU ON..

"AND I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS."

I'M... SORRY... ABBY... BUT... I HAVE... TO KNOW...

I... ONLY WISH... TO TALK... WITH HIM...

"... SO WHERE... IS THE DANGER...?"

CONSTANTINE... COULD YOU . TELL ME MORE.. ABOUT MYSELF ?

I SAID FORGET IT. IT WAS A BAD IDEA...

ANYWAY, I'M NOT A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER. I'VE GOT PLACES TO VISIT...

"PLACES WHERE I'M NEEDED."

I'M TOO BUSY TO SIT EXPLAINING THINGS TO YOU. IF YOU WANT ANSWERS, YOU'LL HAVE TO KEEP UP WITH ME.

NO PROMISES, MIND. MAYBE I'LL GIVE YOU THE ANSWERS, MAYBE I WON'T..

"WE'LL LET IT BE A SURPRISE."

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

THAT'S NOT THE POINT, LOVE. IT'S WHO YOUR BOYFRIEND THINKS HE IS.

...AND UNTIL HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS, THERE'LL BE SOMETHING IN HIS LIFE THAT'S INCOMPLETE

"SOMETHING MISSING."

CONTINUED ON 3 BY FAGLIACCHING

BUT HOW... SHALL I AVOID YOU...?

WELL, THAT MIGHT BE A BIT OF A PROBLEM.

YOU SEE, I MOVE ABOUT A LOT...

"YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR ME.

"I'VE GOT FRIENDS IN LONDON.

"...IN WISCONSIN...

"...IN WASHINGTON..."

"AND IN NEW YORK.

"YOU SEE, I SHARE AN INTEREST WITH SOME VERY UNUSUAL PEOPLE...

"IT OPENS A LOT OF DOORS."

I TELL YOU WHAT... IN A WEEK'S TIME I'LL BE IN A PLACE CALLED ROSEWOOD, JUST OUTSIDE CHICAGO.

IF YOU CAN MAKE IT, PERHAPS WE'LL HAVE A LITTLE CHAT.

"AND SEE WHAT COMES TO LIGHT.

ALEC, IT'S NO USE SHOUTING. HE'S GONE...

"IT'S TOO LATE."

"IN THE DARK..."

"BYE FOR NOW YOU TOO, MS CABLE."

YOU CAN'T. JUST... LEAVE ME...

CONSTANTINE? WAIT...

AAAEEEAAAA

GET IT AWAY! GET IT AWAY FROM ME!

JUDITH?

NNNUUUUUGH! NNNNUUUUUGHH!!

BENJAMIN?

OH LORD, NOT AGAIN. I'LL GO AND FETCH THE TONGUE DEPRESSOR...

OH GOD.

SISTER? SISTER ANNE-MARIE? YOU'RE HURTING MY BABY..

JUDITH, COME ON, DON'T GO OVER THE EDGE

SON, PLEASE, OPEN YOUR MOUTH

OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD

SISTER! SPIT IT! YOU'RE MURDERING HER!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SON...

EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT...

NOW LOOK!

SHE'S ALL DEAD!

DAY IV

OH WELL...

JUST WHEN I WAS STARTING TO GET USED TO BEING *TALLER* THAN YOU...

BUT I DON'T MIND. IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU *BACK.*

HEY, YOU KNOW, YOU STILL OWE ME A *HONEYMOON.* I MEAN, NOW THAT I'M THE BRIDE OF THE CREATURE I OUGHT TO GET THE *FRINGE BENEFITS...*

I THOUGHT NEXT WEEKEND, IF THE WEATHER HOLDS OUT, WE COULD HEAD OUT TO THAT *LAKE* WE FOUND...

WE COULD JUST, Y'KNOW, SPEND SOME TIME TOGETHER.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ROSEWOOD...

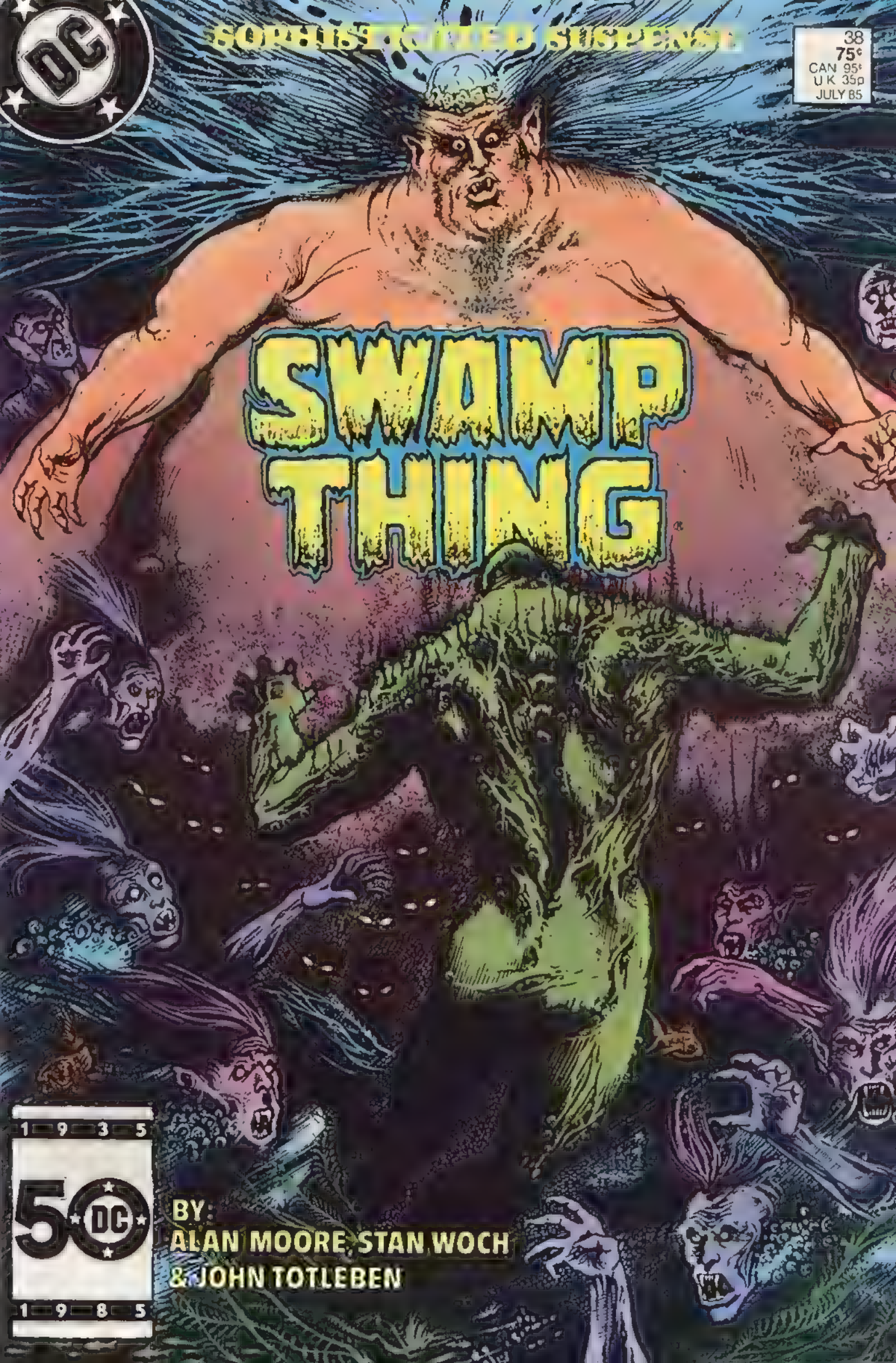
NOTHING.

WHAT?

ROSEWOOD. I KNOW... THE NAME... FROM SOMEWHERE...

I... AM SORRY... ABBY WHAT... WERE YOU SAYING...?

NEXT: STILL WATERS...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ALAN MOORE, STAN WOCH
& JOHN TOTLEBEN

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HE EXPLAINED HOW HE WOULD LET HIS PRESENT BODY DIE, GROWING NEW GREEN FLESH COUNTLESS MILES AWAY. HE ASKED HER IF SHE WISHED TO STAY AND WATCH.

SHE SAID SHE HAD TO GET TO WORK.

SHOCKINGLY COLD, A THRILLING FIST OF ICE CLENCHING SUDDENLY AROUND THE CHEST, GROWING UNNOTICABLY WARMER, DISPELLING THE MEMORY OF THAT FIRST ARCTIC EMBRACE...

THE WATER.

THE WATER BEADS IN THE AIR AROUND THEM.

THEY KISSED WITH A CURIOUS AWKWARDNESS, AND THEN HE WATCHED HER AS SHE WALKED AWAY...

...EACH LOVING THE OTHER...

...EACH HATING THEMSELVES FOR BEING SO UNFAIR.

"DIANE SUSSMAN STUCK HER TONGUE IN HIS MOUTH..."

"I USED MY COMPASS-POINT, THEN RUBBED IN THE INK..."

"HEY! NO FAIR SPLASHING!"

ROSEWOOD MEMORIAL

THEIR VOICES CLATTER THROUGH THE STILL AFTERNOON, ROWDY GATE-CRASHERS AT A WAKE, YET TO NOTICE THE EMBARRASSED SILENCE.

HE LAY DOWN IN A SHELTERED PLACE AND LET HIS INTELLIGENCE SEEP OUT INTO THE UNDERGROWTH.

HIS LAST COHERENT IMAGE WAS OF HER FACE, HER WHITE HAIR AND HER PALE BLUE EYES MELTING INTO GREEN...

THE WATER IS ALL AROUND THEM NOW.

...SO HE SAYS "JEEZ, LADY, I'M DOING IT AS FAST AS I CAN!" NANANANA! YOU GET IT? SEE, THE KID'S NAME IS...

I GOT IT IN FIRST GRADE, YOU MORON.

SAY, HAVE I GOT SOMETHING STICKIN' TO...

ULUEURRGH!

IT'S A LEECH! IT'S A GODDAMNED LEECH!

HOLY...

AW NO! LEMME OUTTA HERE...

I'LL LIGHT A CIGARETTE. ME CAN BURN 'EM OFF...

AULAHLEH! THEY'RE ALL OVER MY LEGS! OH JEEZ...

LEECHES! I HATE LEECHES!

IT'S OKAY! DON'T PANIC! THEY'RE COMING OFF..

AW, GOD, HURRY UP, MAN...

OH, GROSS OUT!

UM, HEY, WHAT'S WITH NICKY?

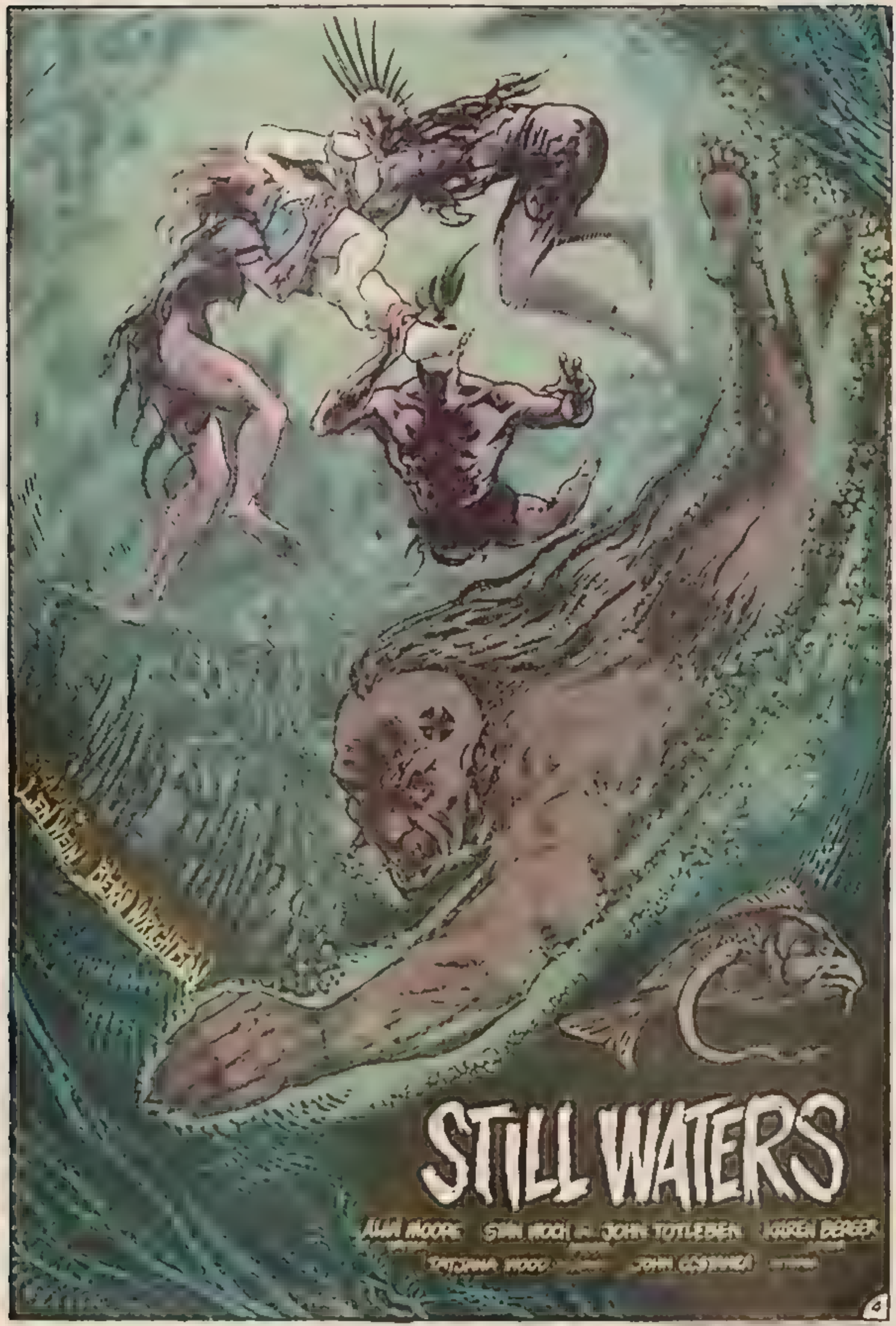
HUH?.

HEY! NICKY, YOU HAIRBAG! GET OUTTA THE WATER! IT'S FULLA LEECHES!

HEY, WHAT'S UP WITH HIM? HE CAN HEAR US...

HEY, NICKY? COME ON, MAN...

NICKY?


STILL WATERS
ALAN MOORE
JOHN TOTLEBEN
KAREN BERGER

HE'S...WHAT, HE'S HAD SOME KINDA *HEART ATTACK* OR SOMETHIN'?

OH JEEZ... UNDER THE *WATER*... I CAN *SEE* SOMETHIN'...

SHUT UP! THAT'S JUST *SHADOWS*...

DARK AND RICH, PUMPING THROUGH OUR HEARTS, LACED WITH THE SILVER OF STOLEN ADRENALINE.

WE FEAST WHEN WE CHOOSE, SAFE FROM THE DESSICATING SUNLIGHT.

DOWN HERE, THE NIGHT GOES ON FOREVER.

WE... WE GOTTA GET HIM *OUTTA* THERE..WE... OH JEEZ, WE CAN'T JUST...

NO. NO, THERE'S *LEECHES*. I CAN'T GO BACK IN. NO.

RONNIE, I CAN *SEE* THEM! UNDER THE *WATER*...

LEON, *SHUT* IT!

SHUT OUT THE KILLING DAY, AND LEAVE US TO THIS WEIGHTLESS TWILIGHT. WE BREATHE IN STAGNANT WATER. WE BREATHE OUT ROSES.

ONE BY ONE, WE DETACH AND GO DOWN...

WE...WE BETTER GO AND F-FETCH SOMEBODY...

LISTEN, NICKY...WE'LL BE RIGHT *BACK*...

O-OKAY?

DOWN...

DOWN TO WHERE THE GREEN BECOMES BLACK...

DOWN TO THE DROWNED TOWN.

SUBMERGED, THE TOWN'S MASK IS ERODED AWAY TO REVEAL THE FASCINATING SKULL BENEATH.

A SPARKLING CURRENT OF FISH THREADS ITSELF THROUGH A SHATTERED WINDSCREEN.

BLIND THINGS WRITHE DOWN LIGHTLESS AVENUES...

HOME...

BARON

WELCOME TO ROSEWOOD ILLINOIS PRIDE OF THE MIDWEST

Kentucky

ROSEWOOD
ROSEWOOD, ILLINOIS
OVER AND OVER HE TUMBLED THROUGH AN EMERALD UNIVERSE, THE NAME A VIVID RED SCRAWL IN HIS MIND
ROSEWOOD CONSTANTINE HAD SAID HE WOULD MEET HIM IN ROSEWOOD
WHERE? WHERE HAD HE HEARD THE NAME BEFORE?
HAD IT HAPPENED BACK IN THE CLOUDY, HALF-RECOLLECTED TIME WHEN HE STILL REMEMBERED HE WAS ALEC HOLLAND?
HIS MIND... REACHED WITH A SCOPE, A REACH AND STRENGTH THE VAST TELEPATHIC ENTANGLEMENT OF ROOTS AND TENDRILS...
HE TRIED TO CONCENTRATE
THERE CAME THE SUDDEN IMAGE OF A BLONDE GIRL, ONLY A CHILD...
THERE CAME THE RATTLE OF BOXCARS IN THE NIGHT
...AND A MEMORY OF TEETH AND DARKNESS, BONE NEEDLES TRAILING WET RED THREAD...
AND HE REMEMBERED.
HE REMEMBERED WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN ROSEWOOD.
HIS CONSCIOUSNESS, A SMALL BALL, ROLLED BETWEEN BURSTS OF PAIN, FLOWN DOWN A LONG TUNNEL
HE HAD BEEN IN ROSEWOOD. THERE WAS BLOOD AND TROUBLE.
EVENTUALLY, SOMEONE HAD CLEANSED THE TOWN BY FLOODING THE DAM
SUNKEN WATER.
THE WHOLE PLACE HAD SOME BAD SICKNESS OLD AND THIRSTY HAD COME FLAPPING DOWN THE INTERSTATE AND SETTLED THERE...
AFTER THAT, THE TOWN GREW STRANGELY SILENT, AND WHATEVER HAPPENED, IN ROSEWOOD HAPPENED AFTER DARK
A [illegible] WALL OF MAN-MADE. A WHOLE CITY OF MAN-BUILT BUILDINGS THE NORMAL ROOTLESSNESS OF MECHANICAL CIVILIZATION
IT TURNED THE PALE THINGS TO BITTER DUST THAT SCARED THE DUST AWAY
LIKE A BEAD OF MERCURY HIS AWARENESS SCATTERED THROUGH THE SOIL MORE.
ROSEWOOD. HE FOCUSED UPON THE WORD, AND THE SUMMONING CELL-WEB ECHOED IN RESPONSE, A SCREEN FULL OF FLICKERING LIGHTS
HE WAS ALMOST THERE.
LOCATING A SMALL AND CITRUSY SEED, HE IMPRINTED HIS CODED INTELLECT UPON THE GERM WITHIN
PROTEIN BALANCES ALTERED. CELLS THICKENED WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES.
HE WAS IN THE WORLD ONCE MORE, GROWING TOWARDS THE LIGHT
AN HOUR LATER, HE BROKE THE SURFACE
CONSCIOUS THOUGHT RETURNED IN THIN, TENUOUS LEAVES, SKIN GREEN MEANS INTO A NETWORK OF PALE BLUE EYES, OF WHITE HAIR..
7
8

ABBY?

ABBY, DID YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID?

...SQUIRMING SLOWLY FREE FROM THE BLACK SOIL'S EMBRACE HE SHOUTED HER NAME INTO THE GREEN WELL WITHIN HIM.

HER RESPONSE CAME BACK, A STARTLED FLUTTERING MUTED BY DISTANCE...

A VOICE, CALLING FROM FAR AWAY...

ABBY? HEY, COME ON. I'VE HAD A WHOLE DAY OF PEOPLE WHO STARE INTO SPACE...

HUH? OH, DEANNA, I'M SORRY... I WAS JUST, Y'KNOW, THINKING ABOUT SOMEBODY...

"ABBY, SOONER OR LATER, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FACE FACTS.

"YOUR HUSBAND'S A VEGETABLE."

MY HUS...? A VEGETABLE? HOW DID YOU... UH...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

UH, WELL, MATT, YOUR HUSBAND. IN THE HOSPITAL..

THAT IS WHO YOU WERE THINKING ABOUT?

OH... RIGHT! YEAH. THAT'S WHO I WAS THINKING ABOUT, SURE.

ABBY, I KNOW IT'S NOT EASY LOSING SOMEONE...

NO. YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.

CONTINUED ON 3-PAGE FOLLOWING

"LISSEN, CONSTANTINE, I KNOW IT AIN'T EASY, LOSIN' SOMEBODY...

"SORRY I DIDN'T BREAK IT TO YOU EASIER. I MEAN, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW..."

"YEAH, WELL, I DON'T, DID I?"

SINCE I LEFT HER PLACE IN NEW YORK I'VE BEEN DOWN SOUTH, ONLY JUST GOT INTO CHICAGO...

SHE WANTED ME TO STAY, Y'KNOW THAT? I SAID, "SORRY, EMMA..."

HEY, MAN, DON'T TAKE EVERYTHIN' ON YOURSELF...

"SOONER OR LATER, EVERYBODY HAS TO GET LEFT ALONE."

LISSEN, I'M ONLY STOPPIN' OVER IN CHI TO SEE SOME BROTHERS, THEM I'M HAULIN' THE HOG BACK TO L.A.

WHY NOT TAKE A BREAK? WE'RE LIVIN' OVER A SURF SHOP. CHERYL'D LOVE TA SEE YA...

SORRY, FRANK...

GOT SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF, JUST OUTSIDE TOWN. TELL ME AGAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO EMMA.

SUICIDE, PAPERS SAID. THREW HERSELF OUTTA THE WINDOW...

WELL, THAT'S A LOAD OF COBBLERS FOR A START...

HEY!

HEY, FRANK!

WHO'S THE FRUIT LOOP?

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

OH JEEZ...

HEY, CONSTANTINE, COME ON...

LISSEN, I KNOW THIS GUY, HE DIDN'T *MEAN* ANYTHING...

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

JOHN, *PLEASE*...

GRUNT

I...UH...

LOOK, I... UH...

LOOK, *FORGET* IT. I MISTOOK YOU FER SOME OTHER GUY.

TAKE IT EASY, OKAY?

LISA, YOU CHEAP *SLUT!* GIMME THREE BEERS OVER HERE...

...AN' ONE EACH FER MY BUDDIES AT THE *BAR!*

THANKS FOR LETTIN' HIM BE, MAN. HE'S JUST SOME...

HEY! YOU BROKE YOUR *GLASS!* Y'GOT *BLOOD* ALL OVER YOUR HANDS...

I SHOULDN'T WORRY YOURSELF ABOUT IT, FRANK..

I'M SURE IT WON'T BE THE LAST.

RONNIE, BILL, LISTEN, WE'VE GOTTS TELL SOMEBODY. JEEZ, WHAT ABOUT HIS FOLKS...?

NO WAY.. WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE SWIMMIN' OUT THERE. MY DAD, YOU DON'T KNOW, HE'D CRUCIFY ME...

THE COPS WOULD DO WORSE.

"BUT, LOOK, DON'T ANY OF YOU UNDERSTAND, OR WHAT? WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE NICKY THERE AND NOT TELL ANYBODY! I MEAN, WE TOOK HIM OUT THERE...

"IT'S ON OUR HANDS!"

THAT'S BULL! IT AIN'T MY FAULT HE WANTED TO GO THERE! I AIN'T TAKIN' THE BLAME. YOU WANT HIM, YOU GO BACK FOR HIM...

I AIN'T GOIN' BACK. I SEEN 'EM. THEY WERE...

ROCK 'N' ROLL

LE-ON...

"DON'T 'LEON' ME! I SEEN 'EM! UNDER THE WATER! THEY WERE UNDER THE WATER...

"...AND THEY WERE DRINKING HIM!"

LEON, SHUT IT!

AAUGH

YOU DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING, YOU LIAR! THERE WASN'T ANYTHING THERE! THERE WEREN'T NO FACES, AND THERE WEREN'T NO FINGERS UNDER THE WATER, AND, AND...

...AND ANYWAY, YOU'RE ALL *CRAZY!* I'M GOIN' *HOME.*

YEAH. YEAH, ME TOO. MY FOLKS DON'T LIKE IT IF I STAY OUT LATE...

I CAN'T *BELIEVE* THIS. WHAT ABOUT *NICKY'S* FOLKS? NICKY'S *BACK* THERE, YOU JERKS.

"HE'S BACK THERE IN THE WATER."

AW, HE WAS JUST *ACTIN' UP.* HE WAS TRYIN' TO *SCARE* US, THAT'S ALL. HE'S PROBABLY *HOME* BY NOW, I BET.

THAT'S WHERE *I'M* GOIN'.

HEY! COME BACK! HE WASN'T ACTIN' UP! RONNIE, YOU *SAW* HIM...

"HE WAS *WHITE!*

"RONNIE, HIS LIPS, HIS CHEEKS, THEY WERE ALL *WHITE...*

"RONNIE?"

OKAY, RONNIE. *SURE.* YOU GUYS GO *HOME.* YOU GET ON HOME AN' LET *MOM* TUCK YA INTO *BED!* WHY *NOT?*

BUT LISTEN, *I* AIN'T LEAVIN' NICKY THERE, OKAY?

YOU GUYS ARE *SLIME,* YOU *KNOW* THAT?

"JUST *SLIME.*"

SLIME DECORATES HER BRIDAL VEIL, ROTTED ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS CLINGING TO THE FISH-EATEN GAUZE.

DECOMPOSED AND DELICATE, WE CARRY IT TO THE CHAMBERS WHERE SHE WAITS FOR US...

WAITS FOR US IN THE DARK...

SWOLLEN, NAKED, WHITE, HEAVY WITH ROE...

HER TIME IS ALMOST COME, AND SHE IS SUFFUSED WITH A TERRIBLE BEAUTY...

ROXY

NOW PLAYING MOTHRA

ONCE, BACK IN THE HALF-LIFE THAT SHE ENDURED WHILE LIVING IN THE DRY LANDS, HER NAME WAS CHARLENE.

SHE WORKED IN A SUPERMARKET AND WORRIED ABOUT HER PIMPLES AND KNEW THAT NO MAN WOULD EVER WANT HER...

NOW THE UNFULFILLED ACHING HAS GONE. SHE ISN'T CHARLENE ANY-MORE.

EXIT

SHE WAITS, PALE AND MAGNIFICENT IN THE HEAVY DARKNESS, FOR THE EMBRACE OF HER FIRST LOVER.

WE CALL HER THE MOTHER.

TOO MASSIVE TO HUNT, TOO CUMBERSOME TO FEED, SHE HUNGERS WHILE OUR VEINS THROB WITH PURLOINED CRIMSON.

WITH NAILS LIKE PEARL SWITCHBLADES WE OPEN OUR PALMS, LETTING HER DRINK DEEP.

SHE FEEDS FOR MANY.

BEHIND, HER BRIDAL TRAIN HANGS BENT AND TWISTED IN THE FILTHY WATERS. GENTLY, WE GUIDE HER OUT THROUGH LAMPLESS PASSAGE-WAYS.

OUT TO MEET ECSTASY...

TO MEET DEATH...

TO THE BIRTH OF A UNIQUE NEW BEING.

FOR SOON, THE DARK MILLENNIUM WILL FALL, AND THE WORLD WILL BE A DIFFERENT PLACE, REQUIRING DIFFERENT SPECIES.

CATARACTS WILL OCCLUDE THE SUN, SHUTTING OUT ITS HATEFUL LIGHT...

...AND FABULOUS LIFE-FORMS SHALL FLOURISH AND STRUGGLE BENEATH THE PERPETUAL STARS.

HER EYES ARE TRUSTING AND BOVINE, DRUGGED WITH BLISSFUL MATERNITY. SHE SMILES AT US THROUGH CLOUDED WATERS.

FROM HER SEA-CHANGED BODY SHALL COME THE NEW GENERATION, BEGOTTEN IN THE DEPTHS...

...BORN IN VIOLENCE...

...SUCKLED IN SHADOW...

...RAISED IN ROSEWOOD.

I BRUSH THE SOIL... THE CLINGING ROOT FIBERS... FROM MY LIMBS...

I... AM WHOLE... AND I HAVE REACHED... MY DESTINATION.

THE SOIL .. THAT FED ME... IS POWDERY... AND DRAINED.. OF NUTRIENTS...

LAST TIME . MY REGROWTH... TOOK WEEKS.. BUT THIS TIME... ONLY HOURS.

I WALK DOWN... TO THE WATER'S EDGE...

THE ABSENCE OF BIRDSONG... UNDERLINES THE HUSH... OF THE EVENING...

I LOOK OUT... ACROSS THE STAGNANT... FLOODED VALLEY...

JUST FOR AN INSTANT... I SEE THE LAKE... TRANSFORMED TO BLOOD.. CLOTTED WITH LILY-PADS... OF DEEPEST BURGUNDY..

THE SMELL... IS OVERWHELMING..

THE VISION FADES... AND I AM ALONE... WITH THE IMPASSIVE WATER...

EVENIN'.

TOOK YOUR TIME GETTIN' HERE, DIDN'T YOU?

CONSTANTINE.

WHO. ARE YOU, CONSTANTINE ?

WHY.. HAVE YOU LED ME.. TO THIS PLACE ?

WELL, PERHAPS YOU COULD LOOK ON ME AS YOUR NEW *MANAGER*...

AN' I BROUGHT YOU TO *ROSEWOOD* TO CLEAN UP THE *MESS* THAT YOU LEFT BEHIND *LAST* TIME.

LAST.. TIME..? YOU KNOW.. THAT I WAS HERE.. *BEFORE*...?

WELL, YOU'RE NOT THE MOST *INCONSPICUOUS* GEEZER IN THE WORLD, AND I'VE GOT SOME *VERY* GOOD RESEARCHERS.

YOU WERE HERE TWO YEARS AGO, BEFORE THE *FLOOD*...

IF YOU KNOW.. OF THE FLOOD YOU KNOW .. THAT I LEFT.. NO *MESS*.. BEHIND ME.

ALL THE CREATURES.. INFESTING ROSEWOOD... DIED... IN THE *RUNNING* WATER...

DID THEY *REALLY*? IS THAT *INCLUDING* THE ONES IN THE *SUPERMARKET*?

SUPERMARKET..?

THAT'S RIGHT. IN THE *FREEZER* UNITS WHERE THEY KIPPED DURING THE DAY. COMPLETELY *AIRTIGHT*, THOSE FREEZERS...

BUT THE *RUNNING* WATER IT WOULD *DESTROY* THEM.

IN A RTIGHT FREEZERS? IT NEVER EVEN *TOUCHED* 'EM

ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS WAIT UNTIL THE WATERS *STOPPED* RUNNING AND BECAME *STILL*...

SEE, IT WAS JUST *SUNSET* WHEN THE FLOOD HIT. NOT ALL OF 'EM WERE *UP* YET, WERE THEY?

"STILL, AND DEEP, AND STAGNANT.."

NICKY?

BUT HOW...CAN THEY SURVIVE...UNDERWATER.. WITHOUT AIR...?

SAME WAY THEY CAN LIVE IN COFFINS UNDER GROUND. THEY DON'T NEED AIR.

SEE, THE VIRUS THAT CAUSES VAMPIRISM IS ANAEROBIC. IT DOESN'T LIKE OXYGEN.

"IT'S A WONDER THEY NEVER THOUGHT OF LIVING UNDERWATER CENTURIES AGO. YOU DID 'EM A REAL FAVOR, MATE."

NICKY?

HUK-

I CAME BACK, NICKY, LIKE I SAID..

VAMPIRES HAVE ONE DISADVANTAGE. THEY'RE USELESS IN DAYLIGHT. ANY GATHERING OF THEM ATTRACTS ATTENTION AND MEN WITH STAKES TO LET AIR INTO THEIR BODIES.

THAT'S WHY WE'VE NEVER HAD ORGANIZED VAMPIRE SETTLEMENTS...

"...UNTIL NOW."

HELLO, HOWARD.

THEY'RE LIVING DOWN THERE, IN ROSEWOOD, TOTALLY UNMOLESTED. HAVING A STABLE COMMUNITY HAS OPENED UP LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM...

THEY CAN SETTLE DOWN, AFTER YEARS OF HIDING...

THEY CAN BREED..

"BREED LIKE FLIES."

NICKY, OH MAN, WE WERE SO SCARED! WE THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD...

BUT... WHY NOW... AFTER TWO YEARS...?

BECAUSE THEY CAN FEEL SOMETHING IN THE AIR.

BIG THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD, MATE. WHAT'S GOING ON IN ROSEWOOD IS JUST THE FIRST TASTE OF WHAT'S COMING...

"JUST THE MEREST TOUCH."

JEEZ!

UH, NICKY, YOU BETTER FIND YOUR CLOTHES. YOU'RE FREEZING...

NOT YET. I WANT TO SWIM AGA N.

SWIM...?

YOU'RE CRAZY. IT'S LATE. WE GOTTA GET HOME...

SWIM FIRST. COME ON, HOWARD. DOWN TO THE WATER...

NICKY? HEY, LOOK OUT! MY SHOES ARE GETTIN' WET!

NICKY, LET GO OF MY ARM. I DON T LIKE THIS STUFF. I DON'T LIKE BEING OUT HERE ON OUR OWN...

ON OUR OWN? BUT HOWARD...

WE'RE NOT ON OUR OWN.

AAAAAAAAAA!

OH GOD, NICKY, PLEASE.

UP ABOVE, NEAR THE SHORELINE, A VIOLENT, SPLASHING SHUDDERS OUT THROUGH THE MOTIONLESS WATER SHE SMELLS, KNOWING THAT HER OFFSPRING WILL NOT GO HUNGRY.

AS WE LEAD HER OUT INTO THE BIRTHING PLACE HER EYES GROW BRIGHT AND CLEAR

HE STANDS ALONE, WAITING FOR HER. SO STILL. SO SILENT...

SO IMPOSSIBLY CALM.

NICKY, PLEASE, I CAME BACK FOR YOU, DON'T..

GLUUHN...

IN THE CENTER OF THE FIELD WE RELEASE HER, THE MOMENTUM CARRYING HER MASSIVE BODY FORWARD AS HANDS HER LOVER STANDS

THEY MEET THEY TOUCH

THEY EMBRACE

NICKEEEEEEEEE!

AND THEN, HER GREAT BODY BUCKS AND HEAVES AS THE BURDEN WITHIN IS RELEASED INTO THE CLINGING GREEN WATER.

WE STAND, MUTE WITH WONDER, AT THE GRACE OF HER CONVULSIONS.

HER LOVER JACKKNIFES IN THE MURK ABOVE THE EGGS; A SINGLE WHIPLASH OF WHITE IN THE BLACKNESS; AND IT IS COMPLETE.

THEY HAVE BOTH OPENED THEIR BODIES TO THE OXYGEN-BEARING WATER NOW...

SID LIVES

THE END WILL NOT BE LONG.

I DID NOT... COME HERE... FOR WARNINGS... OF *ARMAGEDDON*. YOU... PROMISED ME... *KNOWLEDGE*... ABOUT MYSELF...

YEAH, YEAH, KNOWLEDGE DON'T COME *CHEAP*. IN FACT, SOMETIMES THE PRICE IS *ASTRONOMICAL*...

THEY HAVE MADE THE FINAL SACRIFICE.

LIKE SALMON AFTER SPAWNING, THEY THRASH WEAKLY, DECAYING EVEN IN LIFE.

DYING, THEY ARE THE GREATEST AMONG US. LINKING OUR HANDS, WE *HONOR* THEM...

YOU... EVADE... MY QUESTIONS... CONSTANTINE... THIS GAME... THAT YOU PLAY... IS *DANGEROUS*...

WE CIRCLE ROUND...

FASTER AND FASTER WE SPIN, A PALE CAROUSEL CAREENING THROUGH THE SUBMARINE DARK...

THE LOVERS ARE QUITE DISINTEGRATED NOW, A SUSPENSION OF PALE FLAKES IN THE CHURNING WATER.

NO MATTER. THEIR DEATH HAS ITS FUNCTION.

THEY DID THE THING REQUIRED OF THEM.

FIRST, YOU TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS *HERE*.

THEN PERHAPS WE TALK.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ROUND AND ROUND WE GO.

ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND..

THE EGGS CAST A MILKY AND OPALESCENT LIGHT, LIKE THE NEON TUMORS OF LANTERN-FISH. GRAY SHAPES TWIST WITHIN THEM...

NEW LIFE. NEW AND SAVAGE...

...AND UNKNOWABLE.

THE SHELLS BULGE AND RIPPLE AS THE FETAL BLURS INSIDE THEM SPASM WITH THE JOY AND AGONY OF EXISTENCE.

A MEMBRANE BEGINS TO TEAR, AND THEN ANOTHER...

THE MOMENT HAS ARRIVED.

WELL?

IT BEGINS.

THERE...

NOW WE'RE BOTH IN OVER OUR HEADS.

NEXT FISH STORY

DC
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SWAMP THING
1935
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DC
1985

THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE...

THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE THEY ARE SAFE...

NOW, WILLIAM, YOU LISSEN! YOU'RE GONNA TELL ME WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HOWARD AND NICKY, YOU LITTLE SNOT, OR...

DAD, PLEASE... YOU'RE HURTIN' ME! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHIN'...

SAFE...TO LIVE AND WORSHIP... AS THEY CHOOSE.

SAFE TO RAISE THEIR CHILDREN.

TOYS

IT IS. THE CHILDREN. THAT ARE IMPORTANT

WELCOME TO ROSEWOOD

THE NEIGHBORHOOD MUST PROTECT ITS CHILDREN.

WHERE ARE THEY?

AAAA!

KRAK

FOR THEY ARE THE BLOOD OF THE COMMUNITY...

THEY ARE AT THE HEART OF ALL ITS VALUES...

NO HARM MUST COME TO THEM.

THEY'RE IN THE RUM-WATER.

AT ROSEWOOD

WE LEFT THEM IN THE WATER...

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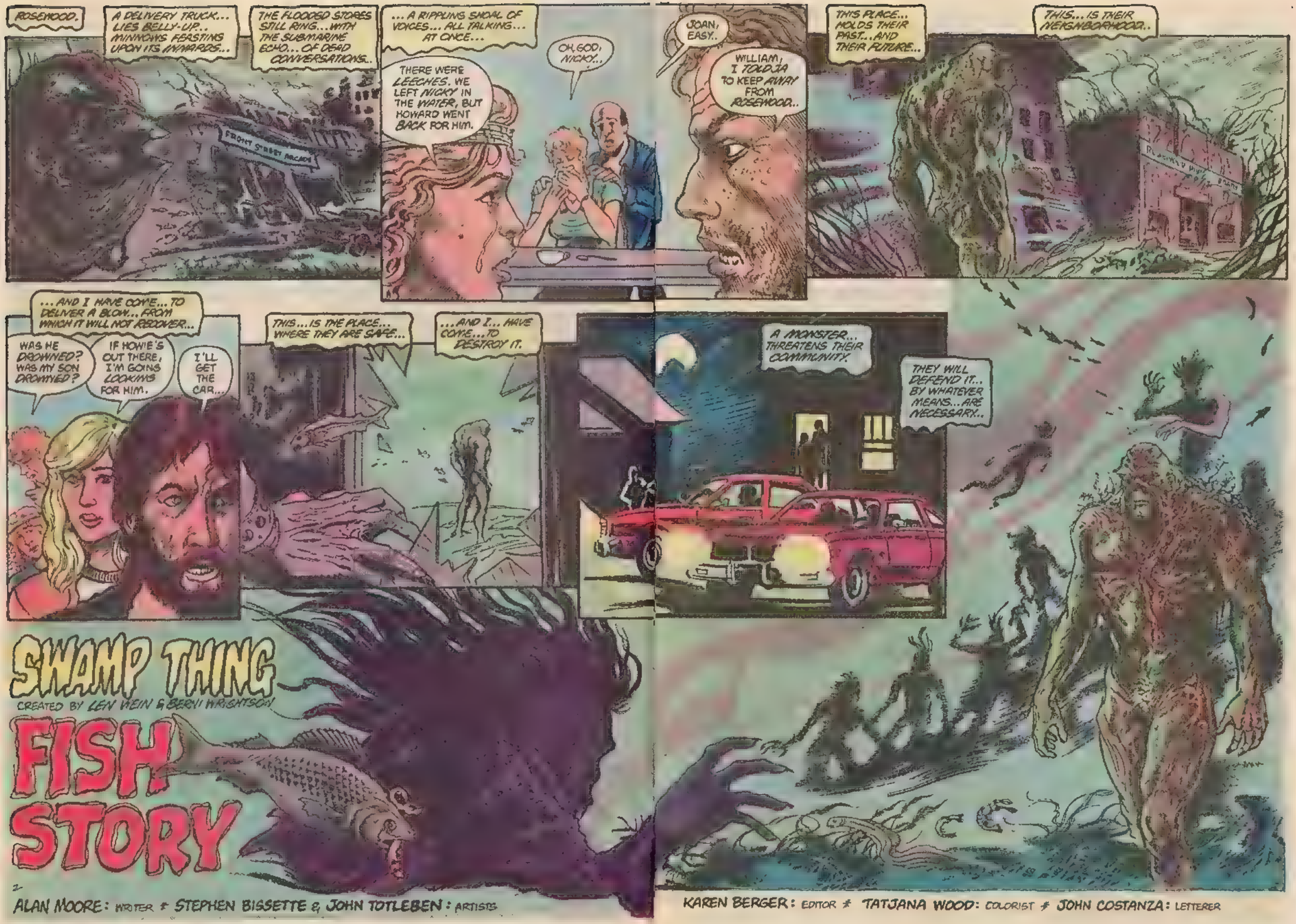
ROSEWOOD.
A DELIVERY TRUCK... LIES BELLY-UP... MINNOWS FEASTING UPON ITS INNARDS...
THE FLOODED STORES STILL RING... WITH THE SUBMARINE ECHO... OF DEAD CONVERSATIONS..
FRONT STREET RACING
... A RIPPLING SHOAL OF VOICES... ALL TALKING... AT ONCE...
THERE WERE LEECHES. WE LEFT NICKY IN THE WATER, BUT HOWARD WENT BACK FOR HIM.
OH, GOD, NICKY...
JOAN, EASY.
WILLIAM, I TOLD JA TO KEEP AWAY FROM ROSEWOOD..
THIS PLACE... HOLDS THEIR PAST... AND THEIR FUTURE...
THIS... IS THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD..
... AND I HAVE COME... TO DELIVER A BLOW... FROM WHICH IT WILL NOT RECOVER..
WAS HE DROWNED? WAS MY SON DROWNED?
IF HOWIE'S OUT THERE, I'M GOING LOOKING FOR HIM.
I'LL GET THE CAR...
THIS... IS THE PLACE... WHERE THEY ARE SAFE...
... AND I... HAVE COME... TO DESTROY IT.
A MONSTER... THREATENS THEIR COMMUNITY.
THEY WILL DEFEND IT... BY WHATEVER MEANS... ARE NECESSARY..
SWAMP THING
CREATED BY LEN WEIN & BERNI WRIGHTSON
FISH STORY
2
ALAN MOORE: WRITER ≠ STEPHEN BISSETTE & JOHN TOTLEBEN: ARTISTS
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR ≠ TATJANA WOOD: COLORIST ≠ JOHN COSTANZA: LETTERER

IN THE STAGNANT DARKNESS AT MY BACK... THERE IS A CHURNING...

I... HAD NOT IMAGINED...

THEY... HAVE FOUND ME...

PHONE

...THAT THERE WOULD BE...

...SO MANY OF THEM...

THEY NUZZLE... WITH WATER-SHRIVELED LIPS...

LIKE PALE AND SCUTTLING CRABS... THEIR COLD HANDS ARE EVERYWHERE.

ESCAPE... IS NOT POSSIBLE.

CONTINUED ON

N-NICKY?

PLEASE, NICKY...

JUST LET ME GO.

I CAN T DO THAT, HOWIE.

THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SCARED. AFTER THE FIRST BITE YOU DON'T FEEL ANYTHING...

HOWIE, YOU RE NOT GOING TO CRY, ARE YOU?

NO!

N-NICKY... WH-WHY HAVEN'T THEY ALREADY DONE TO ME WHAT THEY... WHAT THEY DID TO YOU?

BECAUSE THEY'RE SAVING YOU, DUMMY.

JUST A MOMENT, PLEASE...

AAOOOOYEEE

ITS TASTE IS VILE.

ON PALATES ACCUSTOMED TO THE SUBTLETY OF HEMOGLOBINS, ITS GREEN FLESH IS ACRID AND BITTER

IT HAS NO [redacted]LOOD.

THE EARTH-STRENGTH MOVES WITHIN IT, ANCIENT AND CRUSHING AND TERRIBLE.

BENEATH ITS GNARLED AND MASSIVE FISTS WE EXPLODE, RELEASING OUR STOLEN SCARLET LIKE FLEAS CRACKED BY A THUMB-NAIL.

WE CANNOT FIGHT THIS BLOODLESS GIANT...

...BUT HE IS SLOW AS GRAVEMOSS, WHILE WE ARE QUICKSILVER.

HE CAN BE AVOIDED...

...HE CAN BE HERDED...

...HERDED TO THE PLACE OF THE NATIVITY.

THE STADIUM ENTRANCE GAPES...ITS TURNSTILES... LIKE ROTTED TEETH.

I AM... SWALLOWED WHOLE... BY THE STINKING DARKNESS.

BEYOND... THE FOOTBALL FIELD... HAS GROWN... A LANK AND LUXURIANT GREEN MANE...

A CARTON.. OF POPCORN.. FLOATS PAST.

THEY ARE GATHERED ON THE CENTER LINE.

LIMP... AND WHITE... AND SLOWLY CIRCLING...

SCRAPS OF LITTER... CAUGHT... IN A SLOW-MOTION WHIRLWIND...

THEIR MARBLED FACES... ARE TURNED... TOWARDS THE GLOW...

AWASH... WITH FLICKERING LIGHT...

SUFFUSED... WITH A HIDEOUS RAPTURE...

...AS THEIR CHILDREN SCRABBLE FORTH...

...INTO THE RANCID AND FREEZING MURK...

..OF THEIR FIRST DAY.

IT'S SO DARK...

DON'T WORRY, MRS. SHAPIRO... THE KIDS'LL BE AROUND HERE *SOMEPLACE.*

PROBABLY FOOL'N' AROUND. KIDS THESE DAYS DON'T GIVE A DAMN *WHAT* TIME THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IN...

BUT WHAT IF.., I MEAN, YOU HEAR SO *MANY* TERRIBLE THINGS...

JOAN, LISTEN, NICKY'LL BE OKAY, I PROMISE...

I'M GOING TO LOOK FOR HOMIE. YOU WANNA GO THE OPPOSITE WAY?

COOL AS A *CUCUMBER*, YOUR WIFE, HUH? I LIKE THAT IN A WOMAN...

...BUT THAT JOAN SHAPIRO? JEEZ...BLUBBERIN' AND WHININ'! IF SHE WAS *MY* OLD LADY, I'D...

OSGOOD, PLEASE! WE'RE LOOKING FOR OUR *KIDS.*

HEY.., DON'T TAKE *OFFENSE!* I WAS ONLY...

EEEEEEEE

TAMMY? WHAT *IS* IT?

WE...WE FOUND THE *CHILDREN.* I...

...I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH *NICKY...*

I THINK THE CHILDREN HAVE *HURT* EACH OTHER...

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

... AND THEN
THEY BEGIN
WITHIN SECONDS THERE IS ONLY A SEETHING OF TEETH, A CHURNING OF SHREDDED WHITE TISSUE
THE DANCERS CIRCLE
I WATCH
THE WEAK ARE DEVOURED BY THE STRONG WHO ARE GROUND BETWEEN THE JAWS OF THE SURVIVOR
AND IN THE END
... ONLY ONE
... REMAINS ALIVE

MASSIVE AND BLOATED... GORGED UPON ITS SIBLINGS... IT PAUSES... AND TAKES STOCK ...OF ITS SURROUNDINGS...

IT LICKS PULP... FROM DREADFUL, SPATTERED TALONS... AND CONSIDERS ...WHAT TO DO NEXT...

THAT.. IS A LUXURY... I CANNOT.. ALLOW MYSELF...

I HAVE DELAYED... FOR TOO LONG... ALREADY...

AT MY APPROACH... IT LIFTS FROM ITS RESTING PLACE...

...WITH UNEXPECTED RAPIDITY... AND GRACE...

AND THEN IT TURNS...

...AND SWIMS AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS...

...UNTIL IT IS NO LONGER VISIBLE.

CAN I... HAVE FRIGHTENED IT AWAY.. SO EASILY?

NO...

...IN THE BLACK WATERS AHEAD... I CAN JUST... SEE IT.

IT'S STOPPED.

IT'S TURNING..

HERE...

...IT...

...COMES...

SO FAST...

IT...CAME AT ME...

...SO FAST...

I WATCH... AS IT ATTEMPTS... TO EAT MY HAND...

REPULSED... IT SPITS OUT... MANGLED... GREEN... CONFETTI...

...AND MOVES ON... TO LOOK FOR WARMER ...AND MORE SATISFYING FARE...

MY BODY... IS BEYOND... REPAIR...

I LET IT GO...

.. AND MY CONSCIOUSNESS.. DIFFUSES OUT... INTO THE DREAMING UNDERGROWTH..

I...HAVE BEEN...DEFEATED...

MY BODY.. WAS NOT STRONG ENOUGH.. TO WITHSTAND... THE CREATURE'S ASSAULT.

IT IS .. MY OWN FAULT..

I AM.. TOO HUMAN.. IN THE WAY I THINK IN THE WAY I FIGHT...

I MUST LEARN.. TO EXPLOIT THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT I AM.

MY INTELLIGENCE IS A WEB OF FILAMENTS... AND HYPHAE...

ITS STRANDS. NOW WITH INFORMATION BRINGS ME WORD OF THE DISTANT TREES OF THE NEARBY ROOT SYSTEMS.

I SHAPE THE DISPARATE FACTS INTO A SINGLE COHERENT IMAGE

I FEEL THE CONTOURS OF THE MASSIVE, SINGULAR RESERVOIR THAT ROSEWOOD SLEEPS BENEATH..

I RUN MENTAL FINGERS... ALONG ITS EDGES, EXPLORING ITS BANKS AND SHALLOWS...

BEYOND... I SENSE THE RUSHING.. OF THE ONCE-DAMMED RIVER.

...AND I KNOW...WHAT I MUST DO...

...BUT I DON'T KNOW... IF I CAN.

NICKY? NICKY WHAT'S WRONG?

IT'S MOMMY, NICKY. LET ME HELP YOU...

MOMMY?

I-I'M COLD... AND I'M TOO FRIGHTENED TO MOVE...

YOU'LL HAVE TO COME AND GET ME.

MRS. SHAPIRO?

DON'T GO NEAR HIM!

HE ISN'T NICKY ANYMORE...

HOWIE?

OH, GOD, HE'S ALIVE! JACK, CUT HIM LOOSE...

NICKY? NICKY, I'M COMING...

JOAN...?

JOAN, I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD... THERE'S SOMETHING FUNNY...

HE'S MY LITTLE BOY. HE'S ALL RIGHT...

OH, NICKY...

OH, MOM...

OH JEEZ...

JOAN?

NICKY! NICKY, YOU LEAVE HER BE! YOU...

GREAT GOD, NICKY, SHE'S YOUR MOTHER! YOU MUSTN'T...

WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT IT, DAD? YOU'RE USELESS!

DAD, YOU WEREN'T THERE TO SAVE ME! YOU ALWAYS SAID YOU WOULD BE AND YOU WEREN'T!

YOU WON'T SAVE MOM, EITHER. YOU'RE TOO LATE...

IT'S HERE.

OH, JOAN.

SHLUCH

KGLOK

IT'S ALL RIGHT! I GOT IT! HOT DAMN!

BLAOAM!

OSGOOD, FOR GOD'S SAKE, JUST RUN! GET TO THE CAR!

I TELLYA IT'S OKAY!

I HIT IT RIGHT BETWEEN THE--

AAAYEEEEE

GRDTCH

GGGOOD... OH, GOD, WHAT IF HE'S STILL ALIVE?

NOW, I'M SORRY, I'M SO SORRY...

OH JEEZ! WILL BOTH OF YOU JUST GET INTO THE CAR?

AAEEE EEEE

THE LAKE... LIES STAGNANT... WHERE THE RIVER... LEFT IT TO DIE...

A STRIP OF LAND.. IS ALL THAT STANDS... BETWEEN THE TWO...

I FEEL MY WAY... INTO THE ROOTS THAT KNOT... WITHIN IT'S POWDERY SOIL...

I GATHER MYSELF. IN THE HEART.. OF THE ROOTWEB.

ITS TENDRILS. BECOME MY SINEWS...

MY ARMS .. ARE TWO MILES LONG ENCIRCLING... THE STALE OBSIDIAN DEPTHS.

I BEGIN...

...TO FLEX..

...MY MUSCLES.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOW ...

... AND THE SOLID EARTH SHIFTS... AND RIPPLES LIKE WATER...

I BUNCH MY FISTS... AND THE SOIL CONVULSES...

WHAT IS IT?

I DON'T KNOW... AN EARTHQUAKE. KEEP DRIVING...

I SHRUG... MY VAST... AND BURIED SHOULDERS...

... AND THE WATERS OF ROSEWOOD... REJOIN THE MOTHER CURRENT... THAT BIRTHED THEM...

THE WATER.

THE WATER IS MOVING.

IT NO LONGER STANDS CONTENT IN ITS OWN SLIME AND PUTREFACTION.

IT RUNS. RUNS, EAGER TO REJOIN THE RIVER...

RUNNING WATER.

ONE BY ONE, WE MELT. FLESH SUDDENLY MADE LIQUID, OUR SKELETONS UNDRESS THEMSELVES..

WHY MUST WE BE DESTROYED? WE ASKED FOR SO VERY LITTLE...

ONLY A HOME THAT WE COULD CALL OUR OWN...

...SOME LIVESTOCK TO PROVIDE OUR FOOD...

...A SAFE PLACE TO RAISE OUR CHILDREN

THE WATER LEVEL DROPS.

THE SLIME-SHROUDED BUILDINGS RISE UP.

WE ARE DISSOLVING INTO THE COLD AND RUSHING DARKNESS...

LATER.

ROSEWOOD GROCERY

WELL?

WHERE ARE YOU?

COME ON! I HAVEN'T GOT ALL BLOODY...

.. DAY.

SHNLUP

THLIKD

WOOM FNIT FNIT POPA DINK SHLOT

FWIK FNIT

VWIK VEELCH-

WINK

FWIT

SNIT SCHWIKN

WELL, CONSTANTINE...?

FIVUP!

HMM. COMPLETE REGENERATION IN FIFTY-ONE SECONDS. THAT'S PRETTY GOOD.

I TOLD YOU YOU'D LEARN SOMETH NG IF YOU STUCK WITH ME

CONSTANTINE... I KEPT MY BARGAIN... AND CLEANED UP THE *MESS*

I REQUIRE... MORE *KNOWLEDGE*... THAN *THAT*... IN EXCHANGE.

FOR A *BOTCHED* JOB LIKE TH S? YOU'RE *JOKING*.

BOTCHED...?

A KID AND HIS PARENTS *SURVIVED*. THEY GOT OUT TO TELL THE *STORY*.

THE WHOLE *POINT* WAS TO STOP THAT *HAPPENING*.

YOU SEE, THE STORY WILL GET *BIGGER* IN THE *TELLING*. FISH STORIES *DO*.

BEFORE YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE, EVERYBODY WITHIN FIFTY MILES BELIEVES IN *VAMPIRES* A LITTLE BIT MORE...

...JUST AS THEY *PLANNED* IT.

"THEY"?

OH, USE YOUR *HEAD*. THE PEOPLE WHO ARE *BEHIND* ALL THIS! THEY'RE PLANNING SOMETHING VERY BIG, BUT THEY NEED THE RIGHT SORT OF *ATMOSPHERE* TO MAKE IT *HAPPEN*.

THEY'VE PICKED THE RIGHT *TIME*, TOO...

WHAT WITH ALL THESE *RED SKIES* AND *FUNNY WEATHER PATTERNS* WE'VE BEEN HAVING...

ANYWAY, I'VE GOT TO *GO*. I'LL SEE YOU IN *KENNESCOOK, MAINE*, IN TWO WEEKS TIME.

KENNESCOOK... MAINE...?

CONSTANTINE...

...I DO NOT LIKE YOU.

YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO.

SEE YOU IN *KENNESCOOK*, THEN?

PERHAPS.

PLAB!

BUS STOP

HEH...

DON'T WORRY... THERE'LL BE THREE SHOWING UP AT ONCE IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES.

BUS STOP

HEH HEH HEH...

23

Dedicated to the Memory of the late Greg Irons

Next: THE CURSE

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
SWAMP THING
75¢
40
SEPT. 85
BY
ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

THE MUZAK SYSTEM HUMS "MOON RIVER" BENEATH ITS BREATH, AND SHE WONDERS BRIEFLY WHY WOMEN'S LIVES SHOULD BE PUNCTUATED WITH BLOOD.

TAKING THE BRIGHT PACKAGE FROM THE SHELF, SHE PLACES IT IN HER BASKET.

HERE'S GOOD NEWS FOR HOUSEWIVES!

SALE

ELECTRO-PLATED NICKEL SILVER STEAK KNIVES

SPECIAL SET PRICE

LONG AGO, THE PENNAMAQUOT WOMEN WERE TAKEN EACH MONTH BY THEIR GRANDMOTHERS AND CONFINED IN THE RED LODGE.

THE LODGE STOOD UPON STILTS, THAT ITS DARK AND SULLEN FEMALE POWER SHOULD NOT TAINT THE EARTH.

SHE CONSIDERS THEM HEAVY AND ACHING, SQUATTING FOR DAYS IN THE STIFLING BLACKNESS OF THE LODGE.

MEATS

SANITARY NAPKINS FEMINEX FOR FREEDOM

ON THE PACKAGE IN HER BASKET, A LAUGHING WOMAN RUNS THROUGH ENDLESS FIELDS BENEATH A CORNFLOWER SKY.

THEY WERE FORBIDDEN TO STAND, OR LIE DOWN, OR SEE THE MOON. THEY COULD TOUCH NOTHING, EVEN THEMSELVES.

THEIR FOOD WAS PASSED TO THEM ON STICKS BENEATH THE SILENT GAZE OF THEIR PARCHMENT-FACED ELDERS.

THE CHECKOUT LADY PLACES THE PACKAGE IN A PAPER BAG, AS IF TO PROTECT HER OTHER GROCERIES, AND DEMANDS SEVEN DOLLARS

SHE PICTURES THEM, SWELTERING IN AIRLESS SHADOW, COOL MOONLIGHT OUTSIDE, SILVER AND UNATTAINABLE.

ALL SHE CAN IMAGINE IS THEIR ANGER.

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OVER BREAKFAST THAT MORNING SHE'D ARGUED WITH ROY.

@ phone

WALKING HOME, SHE REPLAYS THE DIALOGUE INSIDE HER HEAD, REVISING THE SCRIPT TO GIVE HERSELF ALL THE LINES SHE WAS TOO RETICENT OR SLOW TO SAY ALOUD.

FRESHNESS AND CONFIDENCE HAVE NEVER BEEN SO SIMPLE.

AUTUMN MORN

WITH THE GENTLE SCENT OF WHITE FLOWERS FOR THE REAL WOMEN IN YOU

...THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING...

HOT AND UNCOMFORTABLE, HER THOUGHTS SEEM TO BE MADE OF JAGGED TIN. THEY JANGLE TOGETHER AS SHE WALKS.

BEHIND THE GLASS AT STEIN'S ADULT BOOKS, NUMB-EYED WOMEN STARE THROUGH ZIPPERED LEATHER MASKS.

ADULT XXX

ZIPS

...THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING, UNRELEASED, UNSPOKEN, ITS MOUTH A RED WOUND...

IN THE STREET, YELLOW DOGS ARE BARKING.

FULL OF SOMETHING WITHOUT A NAME, THE GOOD WIFE GOES HOME TO PREPARE HER HUSBAND'S TABLE.

...THEIR ANGER IN DARKNESS TURNING, UNRELEASED, UNSPOKEN,

ITS MOUTH A RED WOUND, ITS EYES HUNGRY, HUNGRY FOR THE MOON.

SWAMP THING

CHARTED BY
LEN WEIN and
BERNIE WRIGHTSON

"THE CURSE"

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KAREN BERGER: EDITOR
TATJANA WOOD: COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA: LETTERER

WELCOME BACK.

Y'KNOW, YOU WEREN'T AWAY AS LONG AS I *EXPECTED.*

I DON'T THINK I'D REALIZED HOW *FAST* YOU CAN TRAVEL NOW, LETTING YOUR BODY *DIE* IN ONE PLACE AND REGROWING IT SOMEWHERE *ELSE*...

IT IS *STRANGE.* TO KNOW THAT I AM BUT A *STEP* AWAY... FROM ANY-WHERE IN THE *WORLD*,

.. AND *COMFORTING*.. TO UNDERSTAND... THAT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.. I AM ONLY A STEP AWAY.. FROM *YOU*...

I HADN'T THOUGHT OF IT LIKE THAT.

HEY, THAT'S REALLY NICE.

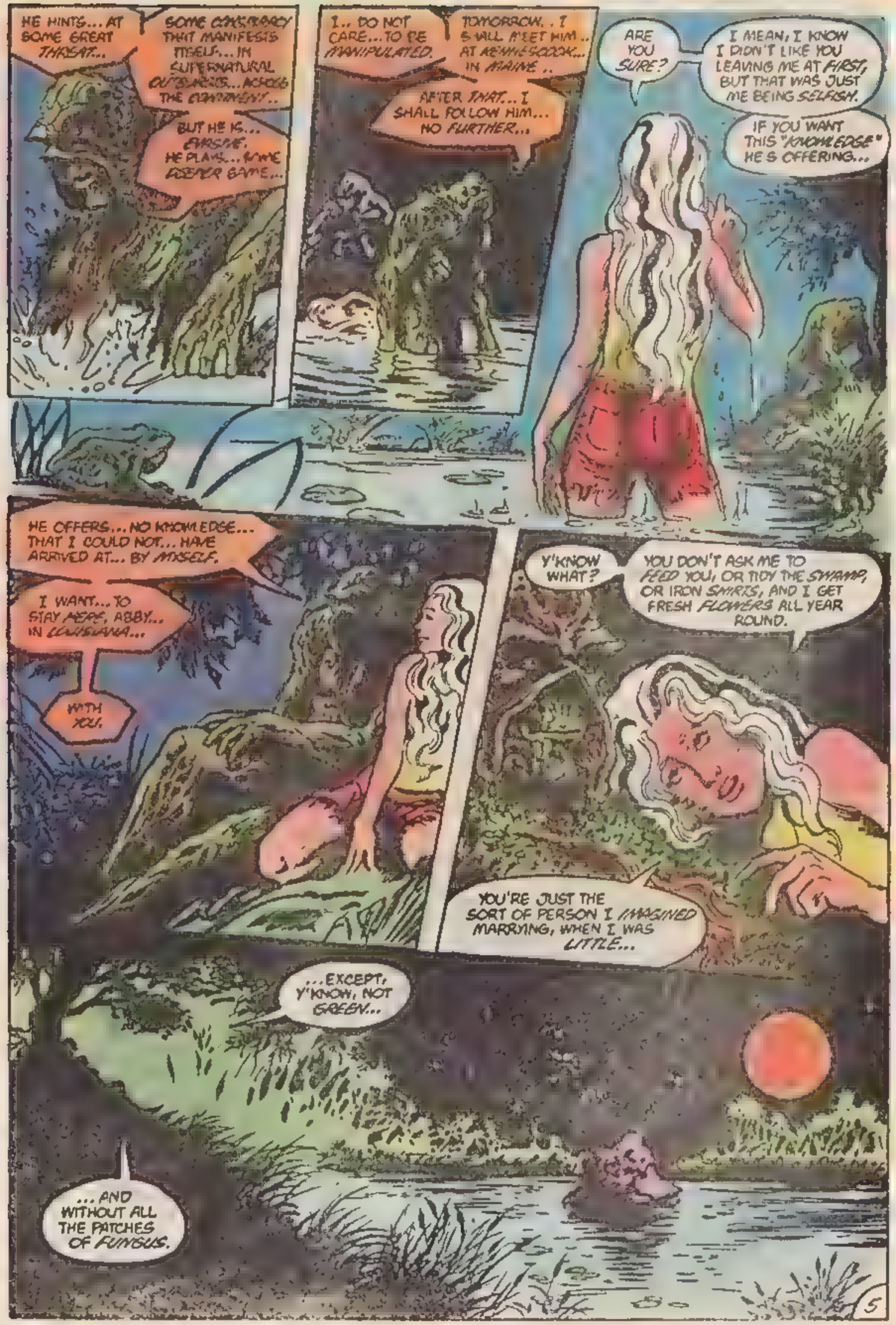
ALEC?

WHAT ABOUT *CONSTANTINE?* DO YOU HAVE HIM FIGURED *OUT* YET? I DUNNO... HE'S LEADING YOU ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, PROMISING YOU *KNOWLEDGE*, BUT...

...BUT DO YOU REALLY *TRUST* HIM?

NO.

CONTINUED FA... C...OW...


HE HINTS... AT SOME GREAT THREAT...
SOME CONSPIRACY THAT MANIFESTS ITSELF... IN SUPERNATURAL OUTBURSTS... ACROSS THE CONTINENT...
BUT HE IS... EVASIVE. HE PLAYS... SOME DEEPER GAME...
I... DO NOT CARE... TO BE MANIPULATED.
TOMORROW... I SHALL MEET HIM... AT KENNEBECOOK... IN MAINE...
AFTER THAT... I SHALL FOLLOW HIM... NO FURTHER...
ARE YOU SURE?
I MEAN, I KNOW I DIDN'T LIKE YOU LEAVING ME AT FIRST, BUT THAT WAS JUST ME BEING SELFISH.
IF YOU WANT THIS "KNOWLEDGE" HE'S OFFERING...
HE OFFERS... NO KNOWLEDGE... THAT I COULD NOT... HAVE ARRIVED AT... BY MYSELF.
I WANT... TO STAY HERE, ABBY... IN LOUISIANA...
WITH YOU.
Y'KNOW WHAT?
YOU DON'T ASK ME TO FEED YOU, OR TIDY THE SWAMP, OR IRON SHIRTS, AND I GET FRESH FLOWERS ALL YEAR ROUND.
YOU'RE JUST THE SORT OF PERSON I IMAGINED MARRYING, WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
...EXCEPT, Y'KNOW, NOT GREEN...
...AND WITHOUT ALL THE PATCHES OF FUNGUS.

KENNEBCOOK, MAINE.

ROY, PHOEBE... I GOTTA HAND IT TO YA! THIS SURE IS A SWELL HOUSE YOU LANDED HERE.

AND YOU SAY IT'S GOT HISTORY?

WELL, Y'KNOW... ONLY INDIAN HISTORY.

USED TO BE, SOME SORTA LODGE STOOD HERE. IT WAS WHERE THE INDIANS SENT THEIR SQUAWS WHEN THEY STARTED GETTING CRANKY AROUND THAT TIME O' THE MONTH.

MYSELF, I DON'T BLAME 'EM. HANANA!

PHOEBE KNOWS MORE ABOUT IT THAN ME. YOU READ A BOOK, AIN'T THAT RIGHT, SWEETHEART?

THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING...

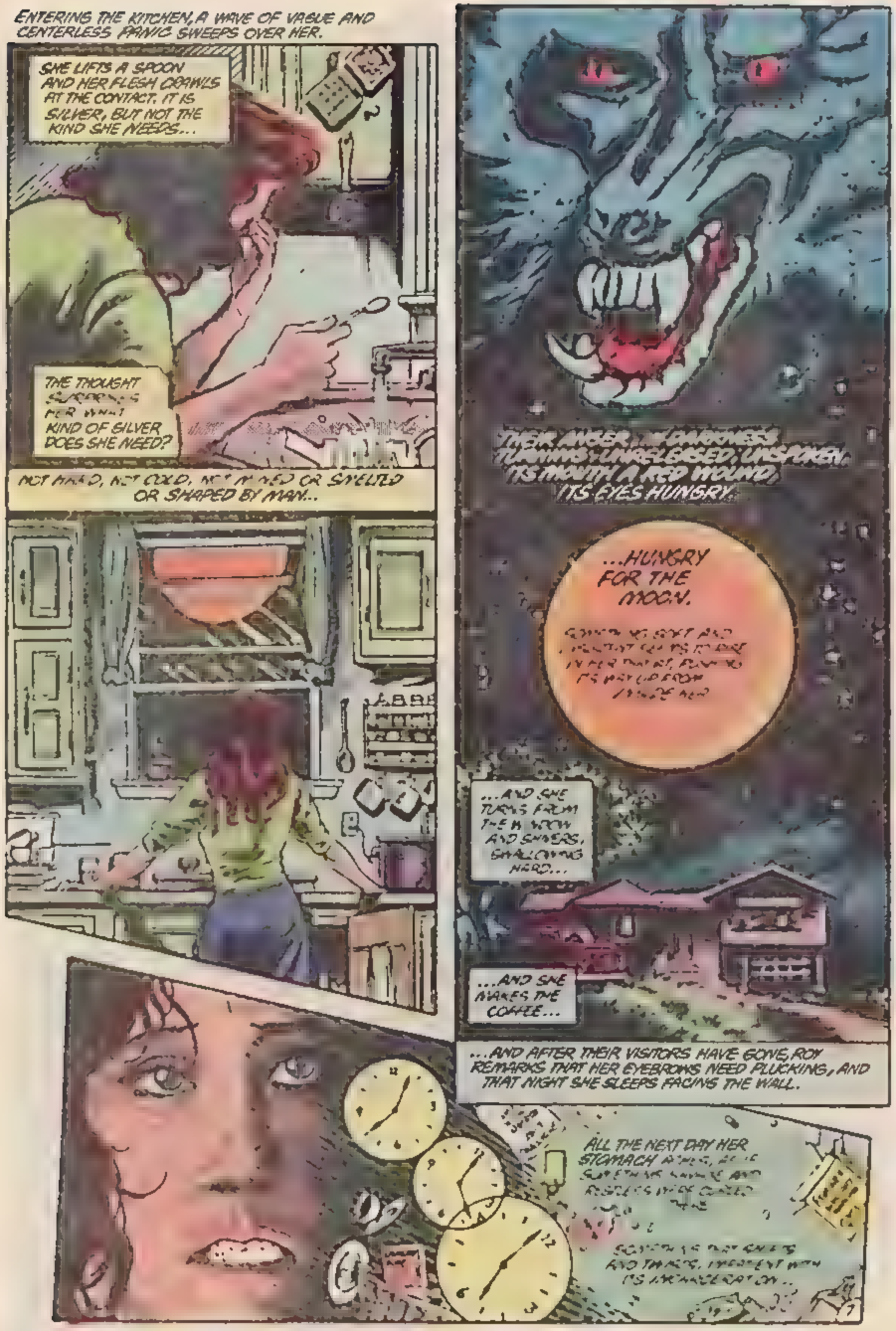
YES. THAT'S RIGHT.

MORE COFFEE?

SURE..BUT NO MORE COOKIES FOR JOANNIE HERE! SHE'S STILL TRYING TO GET HER FIGURE BACK AFTER THE KID.. AND THAT WAS TWO YEARS AGO!

THEY ATE FROM STICKS, LIKE LEPERS, AND THE GOURDS THAT THEY SIPPED WATER FROM WERE AFTERWARDS SMASHED AND BURIED WITHOUT TRACE.

THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING, UNRELEASED, UNSPOKEN...


ENTERING THE KITCHEN, A WAVE OF VAGUE AND CENTERLESS PANIC SWEEPS OVER HER.
SHE LIFTS A SPOON AND HER FLESH CRAWLS AT THE CONTACT. IT IS SILVER, BUT NOT THE KIND SHE NEEDS...
THE THOUGHT
KIND OF SILVER DOES SHE NEED?
NOT HARD, NOT COLD, NOT MINED OR SMELTED OR SHAPED BY MAN...
THEIR ANGER, WILDARKNESS TURNING, UNRELEASED, UNSPOKEN. ITS MOUTH A RED WOUND, ITS EYES HUNGRY.
...HUNGRY FOR THE MOON.
...AND SHE TURNS FROM THE WINDOW AND SHIVERS, SWALLOWING HARD...
...AND SHE MAKES THE COFFEE...
...AND AFTER THEIR VISITORS HAVE GONE, ROY REMARKS THAT HER EYEBROWS NEED PLUCKING, AND THAT NIGHT SHE SLEEPS FACING THE WALL.
ALL THE NEXT DAY HER STOMACH

...SOMETHING GROWING.

KENNESCOOK...

NO SOONER .. AM I FORYED... THAN I FEEL... THE POWER OF THIS PLACE .. CRASHING IN UPON ME...

IT IS... AN OLD POWER..

..A PRIMAL POWER...

SKRIP

...A POWER... LIKE MY OWN...

A DARK BEACON... IT PULSES TO ME...

LIKE... CALLING TO LIKE...

IT WILL NOT... BE DIFFICULT... TO FIND...

PHOEBE?

JEEZ, PHOEBE, I BEEN LOOKIN' ALL OVER FOR YA!

WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' OUT HERE? THE DINNER WAS SUPPOSED TO BE READY A HALF HOUR AGO.

NOT... HUNGRY...

DON'T... WANT... DINNER...

THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING...

OH, REALLY?

WHAT, IS THIS SOME NEW DIET FAD YOU SAW ON T.V. WHILE I WAS WORKIN'?

WHAT ABOUT MY DINNER??

THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING, UNRELEASED, UNSPOKEN...

LEAVE... ME ALONE...

GO... AWAY...

OH. I GET IT. IT'S P.M.S, RIGHT? AS IF THAT WERE AN EXCUSE FOR EVERY-THING!

PHOEBE, I'VE TAKEN ENOUGH OF THIS CRAP IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, IF YOU WANT AN ARGUMENT, THEN LET'S HEAR IT!

WELL?

THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING, UNRELEASED UNSPOKEN, ITS MOUTH A RED WOUND, ITS EYES HUNGRY...

WELL? C'MON, PHOEBE...

JUST SPIT IT OUT...

... HUNGRY FOR THE MOON.

PHOEBE?

:HUK:

:_HEUHUCH...:

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

PHOEBE?

AAOOOUUUUUU!

OH, GOD...

OH, GOD...

RRRUURRAAAGH!

PH-PHOEBE?

PHOEBE, I'M CALLING THE POLICE!

CLIK

SHLOT

YOU HEAR ME??

KRAK!

AAAA

PHOEBE, I DIDN'T MEAN IT! I DIDN'T MEAN ANY OF IT...
OH, GOD, I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY...
HHUHH...
HELP!
HELP ME, SOMEBODY!
KLIITTIISSSH
RRRAAAARR
PLEASE! HELP ME! OH, GOD, SOMEBODY, PLEASE, ANYBODY...
HUUHH...
OH, GOD...

THWUMP

IN MY MIND.. I HEAR.. MY OWN VOICE SPEAKING...

SAYING... "I... AM OF THE EARTH...

"WHAT.. ARE YOU?"

AND IN MY MIND.. ANOTHER VOICE ANSWERS:

"I AM WOMAN.

"STAND NOT BETWEEN ME AND MY WRATH."

13

(CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING)

IN HER... AS IN ME... THE ELEMENTAL ENERGIES ARE STRONG...

WE STARE... INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES... AND I UNDERSTAND... THAT I DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT.. THE AUTHORITY.. TO STAY HER HAND...

ONLY... THE NECESSITY... TO DO SO...

BUT THIS... IS NOT... MY PLACE OF POWER...

GGGRRRRRRRRR!

WHUHH?

IT IS HERS..

KRAK!

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

... AND NECESSITY ALONE... IS NOT ENOUGH.

OH, NO.

PHOEBE...

PHOEBE, PLEASE...

PLEASE DON'T..

I LOVE YOU, I SWEAR, I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU! OH, GOD, DON'T KILL ME, DON'T KILL ME...

THE MADDENING STENCH OF HIS FEAR IS IN HER NOSTRILS. SHE NOTES, WITHOUT SURPRISE, THAT HE HAS SOILED HIMSELF..

WRETCHED MAN.

PATHETIC MAN...

SHE DRAWS BACK HER PAW. ONE BLOW WILL REMOVE THE TOP OF HIS HEAD.

UGLY MAN.

COWARDLY MAN...

NNOOOOO

OOOO

... AND IN THE END, SHE STILL CANNOT BRING HERSELF TO DO IT...

SHE UNDERSTANDS AT LAST THE NATURE OF WOMAN'S CURSE, AND SHE SHRIEKS HER DESPAIR AT THE MOON-BLEACHED SKY.

THE ANGER CRASHES BLINDLY AROUND INSIDE HER WITH NOWHERE TO GO, TEARING AT ITSELF, RAKING ITS OWN FLESH WITH FRUSTRATED TALONS...

SHE DESTROYS THE GREENHOUSE...

...AND THE MAILBOX...

...AND THE CAR...

...AND IT ISN'T ENOUGH.

SHE RUNS...

...AND THE NIGHT IS TOO SMALL A THING TO CONTAIN THE FURY WITHIN HER.

THE MAIN STREET, STRETCHING BEFORE HER, IS A SMEARED MONTAGE OF NOISE AND MOVEMENT, DRENCHED IN THE COLD BRONZED MOONLIGHT.

THE SIDEWALK IS HARD AND UNYIELDING BENEATH HER FEET, AND SHE BREAKS A CLAW.

SIGNS AND MOCKING, THE IMAGES OF HER SLAVERY RISE UP AROUND HER LIKE NAGGING GHOSTS, SECURE IN THEIR VICTORY.

BRIDAL BOU

SHE KNOWS THEN THAT THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE RED LOOSE...

...FOR ITS CRUEL ESSENCE IS IN ALL THINGS...

...AND THE RED LOOSE IS EVERYWHERE.

THEY WERE KEPT IN THE DARK, SQUATTING THERE WITH NOTHING TO DWELL UPON BEYOND THE FACT THAT THEY WERE UNCLEAN.

EVEN THE TOUCH OF THEIR SHADOW WOULD SOUR THE LAND, BLIGHTING THE CROPS THAT GREW THERE...

AT THE END OF THEIR CONFINEMENT, THEY WERE LED OUT BLINKING INTO THE HARSH AND MASCULINE GLARE OF THE SUN.

THEIR CLOTHING WAS TAKEN FROM THEM AND DESTROYED.

THEIR ANGER, IN DARKNESS TURNING, UNRELEASED, UNSPOKEN, ITS MOUTH A RED WOUND...

IN STEIN'S ADULT BOOKS, WREATHED IN THE DISMAL PERFUME OF SWEAT AND LONELINESS, THE MEN CARRIED OUT THEIR TRANSACTIONS...
HEY! THIS AIN'T A LIBRARY! NO SPYIN' WITHOUT BUYIN'!
XXX
FRUIT LOOPS
OPEN ALL NIGHT FOR YOUR EROTIC
FLESH
AAH, THIS STUFF AIN'T NO GOOD, ANYWAY.
YOU GOT ANY OTHER MERCHANDISE, MAYBE LYIN' AROUND SOMEPLACE OUT BACK?
XXX
OPEN ALL NIGHT FOR YOUR EROTIC
COULD BE, WHAT KIND O' STUFF YOU LOOKIN' FOR?
WELL, Y'KNOW...
I'M LOOKIN' FOR SOMETHING UNUSUAL...
XXX
KRRETTTESSH!

I... CATCH UP WITH HER... AS SHE LEAVES .. THE GUTTED BOOKSTORE...

ALL ABOUT US.. PEOPLE ARE SCREAMING...

ADULT BOOKS

PLEASE..

YOU MUST LET ME, HELP..

YOU MUST TELL ME... WHAT IT IS... THAT YOU WANT...

"I AM WOMAN.

"I SEEK RELEASE FROM THIS STIFLING PLACE THAT HAS BEEN BUILT FOR ME."

I...

I CANNOT .. GIVE YOU... THAT RELEASE.

" THEN GIVE ME DEATH."

HER VOICE TOLLS... INSIDE MY MIND... DEEP.. AND SAD.. AND ALONE.

SHE TURNS .. AND SHE RUNS... AWAY FROM ME...

BROSSEAU'S SUPERMART

I DO NOT... TRY... TO STOP HER.

BEHIND THE GLASS, A MACHINE SINGS LULLABYES TO THE SLEEPWALKING WIVES WHO PUSH THEIR SQUEAKING SHOPPING CARTS BENEATH THE FLY-BLOWN NEON LIGHTS

EXIT

SMASH!

THE SUPERMARKET IS AN AVALANCHE OF SMELLS: SOAP POWDER, CHEESE, DISINFECTANT...

...AND ABOVE ALL, THE ODOR OF WOMEN'S LIVES GROWN IRREVOCABLY STALE. THE RED LODGE. THE RED LODGE IS EVERYWHERE!

SHE TEARS AT IT WITH LACERATED NAILS, TRYING TO RIP AWAY ITS IMPERSONAL STRIPLIT MASK AND REVEAL THE FIEND SHADOWS BENEATH

WHY DOES NO ONE SEE IT?

WHY DO THEY SHUFFLE SO PASSIVELY INTO THAT DARKNESS?

HER EYES ARE DULL AND UNCOMPREHENDING. THEY SEE NOTHING BUT HER FURY.

HER USELESS, LOVELESS RAGE

BEFORE HER TEAR-FOGGED EYES SHE SEES THE GLINT OF SILVER ON CHEAP CUTLERY...

IT'S A POOR KIND OF MOONLIGHT.

IT'S A POOR KIND OF FREEDOM.

...BUT, IN THE END, IT IS THE ONLY KIND SHE HAS

HERE'S GOOD NEWS FOR HOUSEWIVES

STEAK KNIVES

NO!

SKUTCH

HERE'S GOOD FO HOUS

NEWS: VIVES

SALE

...OUTSIDE... DON'T WANT...TO DIE...INDOORS...

:AAUH:

!BLAZ

JEEZ, WHAT IS IT? I SAW THAT BIG DOG GO CRASHING IN THERE...

OH, GOD, IT'S GOT A WOMAN! WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING?

SQUERM

TH-THANK YOU...

WAS...WAS ROY ALL RIGHT...?

YES.

GOOD.

THAT'S GOOD.

OH, LOOK AT THE MOON. SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL. SHE'S...

I LEAVE HER THERE... DOUSED... IN BLOOD... AND MOONLIGHT... AND I WALK AWAY...

NO ONE TRIES TO STOP ME.

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

LATER.

'EVENIN'!

CONSTANTINE.

I WAS...WONDERING... WHEN YOU...WOULD ARRIVE...

WANTED TO KNOW WHERE WE WERE OFF TO NEXT, EH? WELL, I'VE GOT YOUR TRAVEL INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS PIECE OF PAPER HERE...

I... DO NOT... CARE!

WHEREVER IT IS, I DO NOT WISH TO GO. I AM RETURNING HOME TO LOUISIANA..

REALLY? FAIR ENOUGH.

SWISH

YOU DON'T APPEAR... TO BE CONCERNED..

WHY SHOULD I BE? IT'S A FREE WORLD, CHIEF. YOU GO WHERE YOU LIKE.

SEE YOU AROUND.

LOUISIANA

next:
SOUTHERN CHANGE

85
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DC COMICS PRESENTS®

SUPERMAN®

and

SWAMP THING™

★ 1935 ★
50 DC™
★ 1985 ★

INTERSTATE 55 BAKES IN THE OVEN OF NOON, THE HORIZON RIPPLING AND CHURNING AS IF VIEWED THROUGH BOILING WATER.
HE'S HEADING SOUTH.
A SICKLY TINSLING TRAVERSES HIS SCALP, SETTLING AT THE NAPE OF HIS NECK. HIS SHIRT, DAMP AND UNPLEASANT, STICKS TO HIS SHOULDER BLADES.
THE EYES THAT ONCE WATCHED QUARKS AT PLAY ARE SUNKEN, AND SHOT WITH RED.
HALLUCINATIONS CROWD THE PERIPHERY OF HIS VISION.
FOR AN INSTANT THE CAR IS STREAKING THROUGH A BLOOD-SOAKED FOREST, THE BLURRED FACES OF EXTINCT ANIMALS STARING FROM THE CRIMSON UNDERGROWTH...
...BUT ONLY FOR AN INSTANT.
SWERVING, HE BRUISES HIS KNEE ON THE UNDERSIDE OF THE DASHBOARD, AND THE PAIN IS NO LONGER A NOVELTY TO HIM.
EEEEEEEEEEEE
DESAD
BESIDE HIM LIES THE FRAGMENT OF A SHATTERED WORLD.
BEFORE HIM LIES THE SUNSTRUCK HIGHWAY.
DAILY PLANET
THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS HEADING SOUTH TO DIE.

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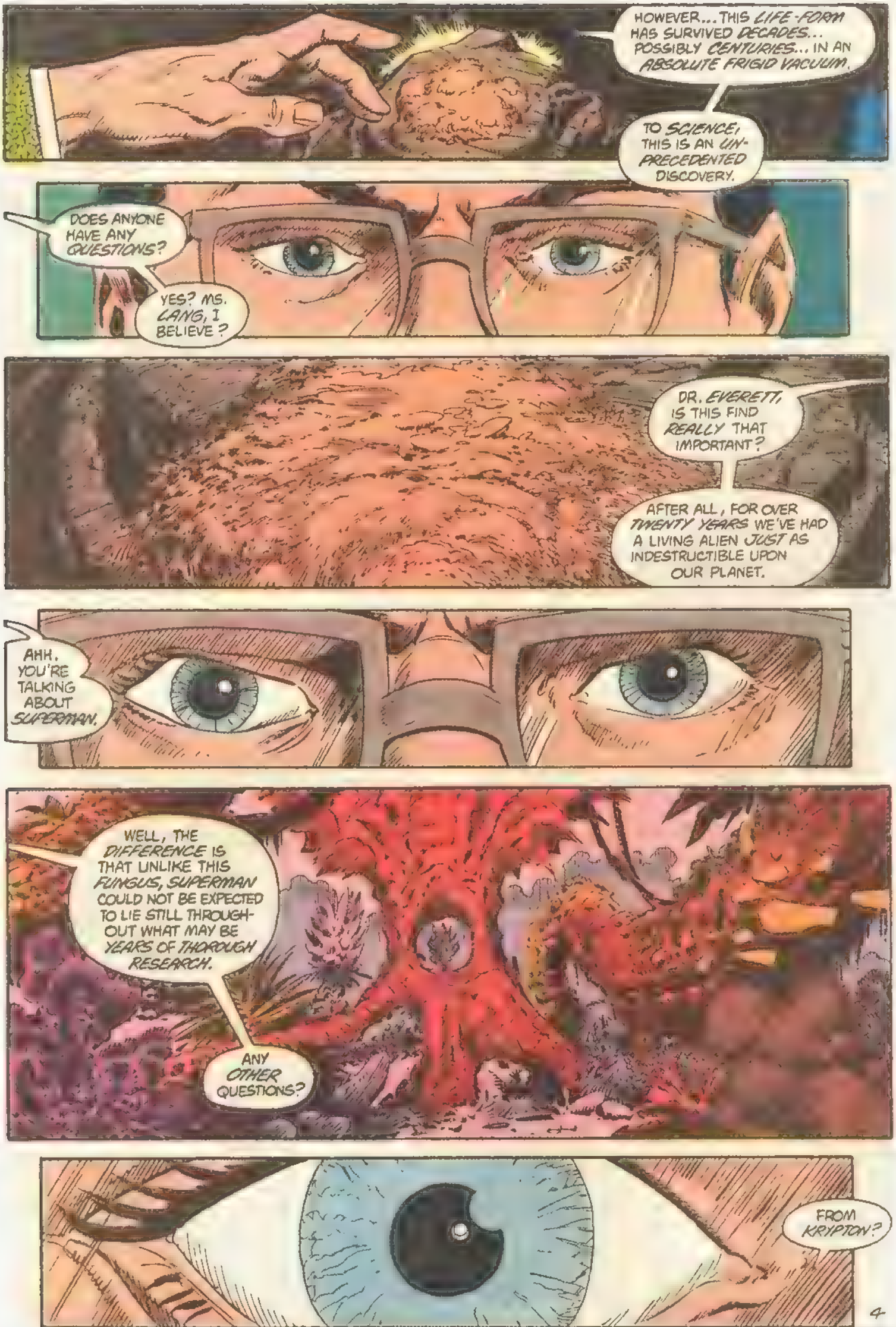
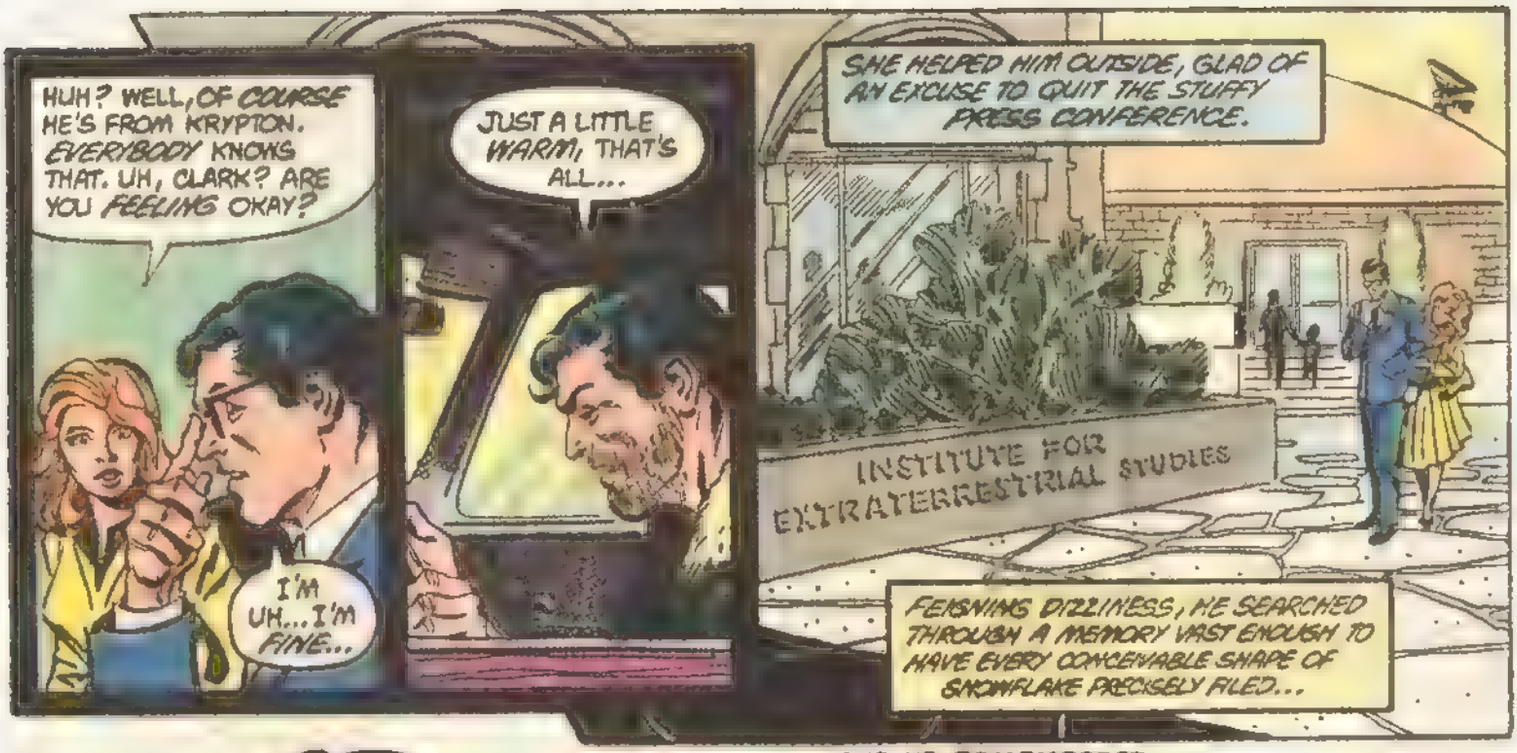
WRITER ALAN MOORE · PENCILLER RICK VEITCH · INKER AL WILLIAMSON · LETTERER COSTANZA · COLORIST TATJANA WOOD · EDITOR JULIUS SCHWARTZ

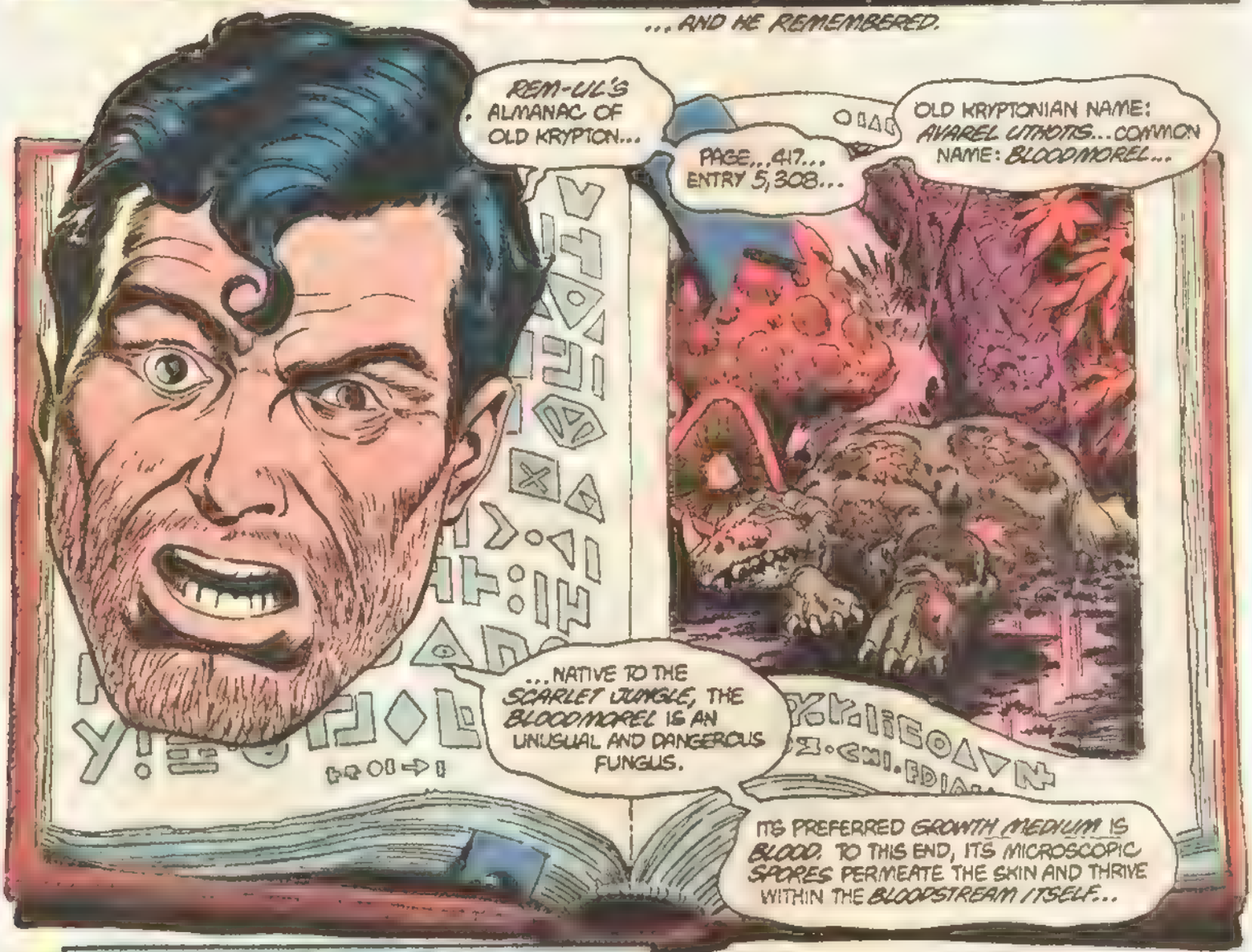
ONCE HE BATHED IN THE HEART OF THE SUN, CARELESS OF THE MILE-HIGH GEYSERS OF FLAME THAT SPAT AT HIM IN FRUSTRATED OUTRAGE.
NOW, FOR HIS IMPUDENCE, IT COOKS HIM BY DEGREES.
THE CAR IS FULL OF PEOPLE...
CLARK?
...AND THEN IT ISN'T A CAR AT ALL.
CLARK, ARE YOU TAKING ALL THIS IN?
I--I THINK SO.
GOOD. THIS IS SO BORING I KEEP TUNING OUT AND MISSING THINGS.
THEY DIDN'T NEED TO SEND BOTH OF US TO COVER A CHUNK OF ROCK...
IN SUMMARY, THEN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
IN THESE DAYS WHEN REPORTS OF ALIEN CONTACT ARE COMMONPLACE, THIS METEORITE MAY NOT APPEAR SPECIAL.
IT ISN'T. WHAT'S GROWING UPON IT IS.
THERE IS A TINY PATCH OF LIVING FUNGUS THAT HAS SOMEHOW SURVIVED THE RIGORS OF SPACE.
IT ISN'T SPECTACULARLY BIG OR COLORFUL... IT'S A DULLISH RED, AND YOU'D NEED A MICROSCOPE TO EXAMINE IT PROPERLY...
3

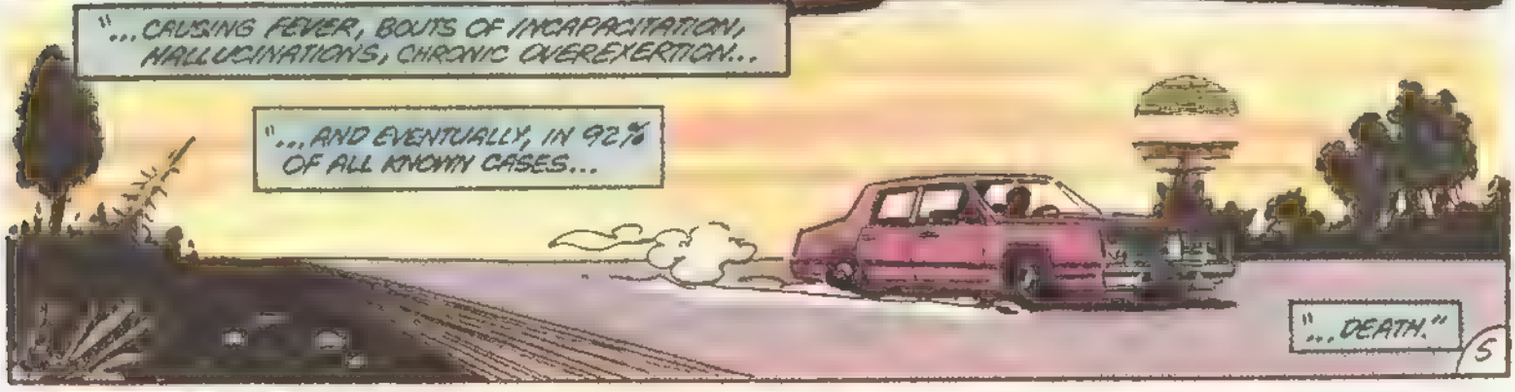

HOWEVER... THIS LIFE-FORM HAS SURVIVED DECADES... POSSIBLY CENTURIES... IN AN ABSOLUTE FRIGID VACUUM.
TO SCIENCE, THIS IS AN UN-PRECEDENTED DISCOVERY.
DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?
YES? MS. LANG, I BELIEVE?
DR. EVERETT, IS THIS FIND REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?
AFTER ALL, FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS WE'VE HAD A LIVING ALIEN JUST AS INDESTRUCTIBLE UPON OUR PLANET.
AHH. YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT SUPERMAN.
WELL, THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT UNLIKE THIS FUNGUS, SUPERMAN COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO LIE STILL THROUGH-OUT WHAT MAY BE YEARS OF THOROUGH RESEARCH.
ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?
FROM KRYPTON?

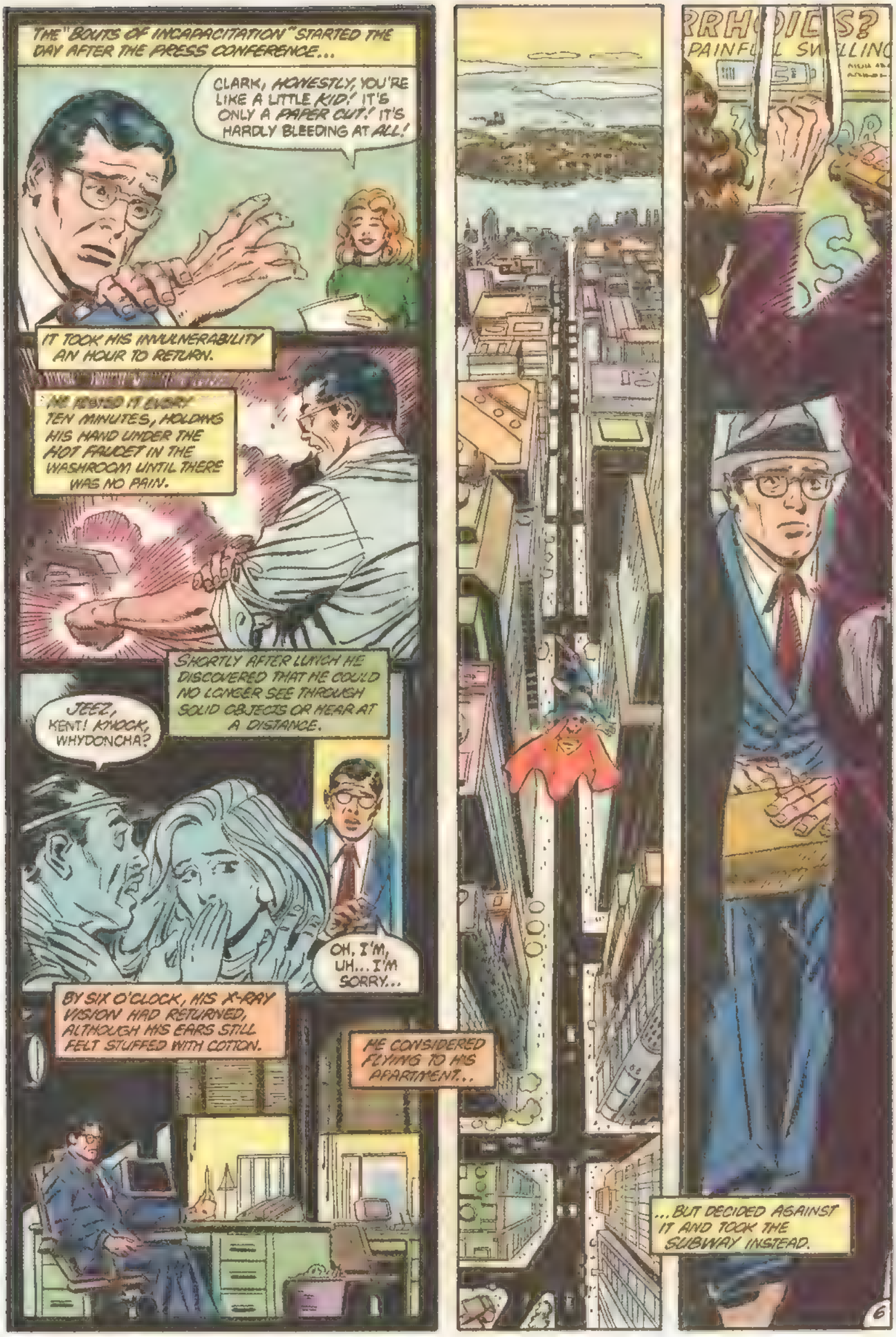
CONTINUED ON 2ND FACE TO THE MIND


HUH? WELL, OF COURSE HE'S FROM KRYPTON. EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT. UH, CLARK? ARE YOU FEELING OKAY?
I'M UH... I'M FINE...
JUST A LITTLE WARM, THAT'S ALL...
SHE HELPED HIM OUTSIDE, GLAD OF AN EXCUSE TO QUIT THE STUFFY PRESS CONFERENCE.
INSTITUTE FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL STUDIES
FEIGNING DIZZINESS, HE SEARCHED THROUGH A MEMORY VAST ENOUGH TO HAVE EVERY CONCEIVABLE SHAPE OF SNOWFLAKE PRECISELY FILED...

...AND HE REMEMBERED.

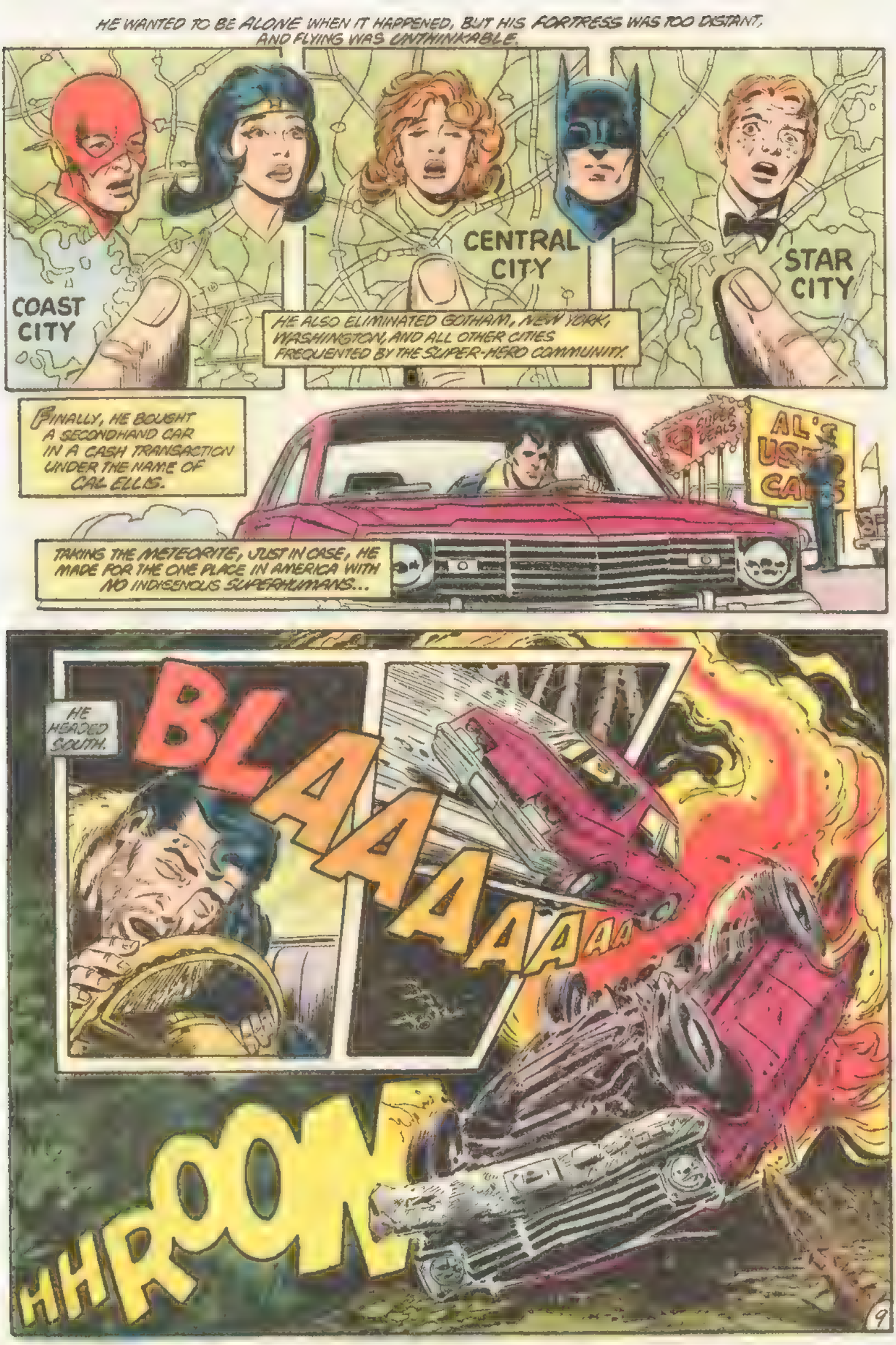

REM-UL'S ALMANAC OF OLD KRYPTON...
PAGE...417... ENTRY 5,308...
OLD KRYPTONIAN NAME: AVAREL LITHOTIS... COMMON NAME: BLOODMOREL...
...NATIVE TO THE SCARLET JUNGLE, THE BLOODMOREL IS AN UNUSUAL AND DANGEROUS FUNGUS.
ITS PREFERRED GROWTH MEDIUM IS BLOOD. TO THIS END, ITS MICROSCOPIC SPORES PERMEATE THE SKIN AND THRIVE WITHIN THE BLOODSTREAM ITSELF...


"...CAUSING FEVER, BOUTS OF INCAPACITATION, HALLUCINATIONS, CHRONIC OVEREXERTION...
"...AND EVENTUALLY, IN 92% OF ALL KNOWN CASES...
"...DEATH."


THE "BOUTS OF INCAPACITATION" STARTED THE DAY AFTER THE PRESS CONFERENCE...
CLARK, HONESTLY, YOU'RE LIKE A LITTLE KID! IT'S ONLY A PAPER CUT! IT'S HARDLY BLEEDING AT ALL!
IT TOOK HIS INVULNERABILITY AN HOUR TO RETURN.
HE TESTED IT EVERY TEN MINUTES, HOLDING HIS HAND UNDER THE HOT FAUCET IN THE WASHROOM UNTIL THERE WAS NO PAIN.
SHORTLY AFTER LUNCH HE DISCOVERED THAT HE COULD NO LONGER SEE THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS OR HEAR AT A DISTANCE.
JEEZ, KENT! KNOCK, WHYDONCHA?
OH, I'M, UH... I'M SORRY...
BY SIX O'CLOCK, HIS X-RAY VISION HAD RETURNED, ALTHOUGH HIS EARS STILL FELT STUFFED WITH COTTON.
HE CONSIDERED FLYING TO HIS APARTMENT...
...BUT DECIDED AGAINST IT AND TOOK THE SUBWAY INSTEAD.
6

THAT NIGHT, THE HALLUCINATIONS BEGAN...
KAL? WAKE UP, KAL...
I MEAN, WITHOUT YOUR POWERS YOU AREN'T, UH, ANYBODY SPECIAL. DEATH COMES TO EVERYONE IN THE END.
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP, BOTH OF YOU! I'M NOT LISTENING! YOU'RE NOT...
KAL, YOU'RE DYING. IT ISN'T RIGHT THAT YOU SHOULD END UP LIKE THIS. YOU'RE A LEGEND!
YOU'VE GOT TO FIGHT IT, KAL...
YOU'RE NO EXCEPTION. LIE BACK AND ACCEPT IT...
CLARK, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? HE CAN'T JUST...
WITH RESPECT, SUPERMAN, I, UH, DON'T AGREE.
...REAL.
MERCIFUL RAO..
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

HIS SUPER-HEARING RETURNED, DEAFENINGLY, WHILE HE WAS CROSSING SEVENTH AVENUE ON HIS WAY TO WORK.
LATER, DURING COFFEE BREAK, HE KNOCKED A CUP FROM HIS DESK AND WASN'T FAST ENOUGH TO CATCH IT.
THERE WAS ONLY ONE OPTION OPEN TO HIM.
INSTITUTE FOR EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL STUDIES
TOUCHINGLY, DR. EVERETT HAD GIVEN HIM THE PROMISED METEORITE ALMOST WITHOUT QUESTION.
HE PROMISED TO RETURN IT, UNHARMED, IF THAT WAS POSSIBLE.
RETURNING TO HIS APARTMENT, HE BEGAN TO EXAMINE IT FOR CLUES TO A POSSIBLE ANTIDOTE.
AFTER TWENTY MINUTES, HIS MICROSCOPIC VISION FAILED AND HE WAS FORCED TO STOP.
HE UNDERSTOOD THEN THAT HE WAS GOING TO DIE...
...AND THE ONLY QUESTION THAT REMAINED WAS WHERE.
8


HE WANTED TO BE ALONE WHEN IT HAPPENED, BUT HIS FORTRESS WAS TOO DISTANT, AND FLYING WAS UNTHINKABLE.
COAST CITY
CENTRAL CITY
STAR CITY
HE ALSO ELIMINATED GOTHAM, NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, AND ALL OTHER CITIES FREQUENTED BY THE SUPER-HERO COMMUNITY.
FINALLY, HE BOUGHT A SECONDHAND CAR IN A CASH TRANSACTION UNDER THE NAME OF CAL ELLIS.
SUPER DEALS
AL'S USED CARS
TAKING THE METEORITE, JUST IN CASE, HE MADE FOR THE ONE PLACE IN AMERICA WITH NO INDIGENOUS SUPERHUMANS...
HE HEADED SOUTH.
BLAAAAAAA
HHROOM
9

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

HIS CLOTHING... IS CHARRED... AND BLACKENED.
HE HAS COME... THROUGH THE FIRE... EVEN AS I... ONCE CAME... THROUGH THE FIRE...
WAS HE... INSIDE... THE VEHICLE... WHEN I HEARD IT... EXPLODE...?
I WONDER... WHY HE IS NOT DEAD..?
I WONDER... WHO HE IS...?

KAL-EL?
IT'S NO GOOD RUNNING, KAL-EL...
YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING FOR MORE THEN TWENTY YEARS, KAL-EL...
...RUNNING FROM THE DEATH OF YOUR PLANET.
YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED ON KRYPTON, KAL-EL, AS YOU WERE MEANT TO. YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?
NOW, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF RUNNING, YOUR DESTINY HAS FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH YOU...
HERE, KAL-EL...
HERE IN THE SCARLET JUNGLE.
LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU'RE ALL DEAD!
EXTINCT IS THE WORD, KAL-EL.
WE'RE EXTINCT, LIKE ALL KRYPTONIANS...
COME AND JOIN US. TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE SHADE OF THESE BROAD CRIMSON LEAVES...
...FOREVER!

HIS FACE... IS STRANGELY... FAMILIAR...
SLEEPING... HE CLASPS THE ROCK... TO HIS BREAST... AS IF IT WERE... AN UGLY CHILD...
I EXAMINE IT...
ITS UNDERSIDE... IS DISCOLORED ...BY BRITTLE PINK MOSS... A SPECIES... THAT I DO NOT... RECOGNIZE...
INQUISITIVE... I BRUSH... ITS DRY AND ENGRAVED SURFACE... WITH MY FINGERTIPS...
I SENSE... THE UNUSUAL RHYTHMS... IN ITS CELLS... IN ITS PARCHED TISSUES...
CONCENTRATING... I TRY... TO ESTABLISH...
RED TREES... RED SUN... TOO MUCH GRAVITY... TOO MUCH SENSATION...
PULL BACK... PULL BACK AWAY FROM IT...
THE STONE DROPS ...FROM MY FINGERS... AND THE CONTACT... IS BROKEN...
WHAT HAPPENED?
I... TOUCHED IT... AND I WAS ON... ANOTHER WORLD...
IT ISN'T... FROM HERE. IT'S... FOREIGN...
...ALIEN.
13
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

I STUDY THE MAN'S FACE... ITS HAUNTING FAMILIARITY..
STAY BACK! ALL OF YOU! STAY BACK FROM ME!
I THINK... THAT I KNOW... WHO HE IS...
I MOVE TOWARDS HIM.
I DON'T BELONG HERE! I'M NOT DEAD...
I BEGIN TO OPEN... THE BLACKENED TATTERS ...OF HIS SHIRT...
HE MOVED SLIGHTLY... MUTTERING WORDS... IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE...
I WON'T ROT HERE WITH THE REST OF YOU! YOU CAN'T KEEP ME HERE!
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

SUPERMAN?
UNHH... GET AWAY... YOU'RE ALL DEAD...

GET AWAY FROM ME!!

SSIIZZT!
THERE IS... A HOLE... IN MY CHEST... IT WILL HEAL...
BEHIND ME... MY AWAKENED VISITOR... RANTS... AT EMPTY AIR...
HIS SKIN GLISTENS... SLICK... WITH FEVERISH PERSPIRATION...
BELLOWING WITH RAGE... HE MOVES HIS HEAD... IN A CURIOUS SIDEWAYS MOTION...
... AND ON THE OTHER SIDE... OF THE CLEARING... AN INVISIBLE SCYTHE BEGINS TO REAP THE TREES...
FOUR BUSHES... BURST INTO FLAME...
IN ITS STUMP... THE RANCID GREEN WATER... BEGINS TO BOIL...
THE MOST POWERFUL CREATURE... ON THE PLANET HAS COME AWAKE!

HE STARES... STATIC CRACKLING IN EYES... THAT HAVE TRAVELED... BEYOND REASON...
A BOULDER SHIFTS ITS HUE... FROM GRAY... TO RED... TO WHITE...
...AND FINALLY SHATTERS.
HE HOWLS..
...AND A HURRICANE... SPILLS FROM HIS LIPS...
I... DARE NOT... LOOK.
I... DARE NOT... LOOK AWAY.
HANGING IN THE AIR... HE BURNS LIKE A SUPER-NOVA... APPROACHING ITS CRESCENDO..
SWEAT DRIPS FROM HIS BROW... VAPORIZING INSTANTLY... IN THE RAYS FROM HIS EYES...
I REALIZE... THAT SOON.. THE OVER-EXERTION ...WILL KILL HIM...
EVEN HIM.
16

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

I MUST... CALM HIM...
BUT HE IS... UNREACHABLE. THERE IS... NO MEANS... OF COMMUNICATION...
NO POSSIBILITY...
...OF CONTACT.
CONTACT.

THE RED SUN... SHRIVELS THE RED GRASS...
THE DEAD BIRDS... SHRIEK WITH RED VOICES...
I... AM ELSEWHERE...
...WITH HIM.
MORE PHANTOMS..?
YOU CAN'T KEEP ME HERE! I ESCAPED! THE PLANET DIED, BUT I ESCAPED!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
I'M NOT LIKE YOU!
I'M NOT EXTINCT..
I'M ALIVE!
YOU'RE DYING.
18

NOOOO!
SSZZIZZT!
PLEASE... YOU CANNOT... DESTROY ME...
I AM A... FRIEND..
YOU MUST NOT... EXERT YOURSELF...
YOU WON'T TRICK ME THAT WAY. YOU WANT ME TO GIVE UP. IS THAT IT?
WELL, IT WON'T WORK...
I'M SUPERMAN.
I GO DOWN FIGHTING!
SHRUNCH!
NO...
IT IS... THE FIGHTING... THAT IS KILLING YOU...
19

YOU... ARE BURNING UP.. FROM THE INSIDE...
THE FEVER...RAGING WITHIN YOU... PUSHES... YOUR WEAKENED BODY... BEYOND ITS LIMITS...
LIMITS... YES! YES, I...
...I REMEMBER...
"CHRONIC OVEREXERTION, AND EVENTUALLY... EVENTUALLY...
"... EVENTUALLY... DEATH."
YOU MUST... BE STILL... IF YOU WISH... TO SURVIVE...
I CAN'T... THE FEVER... SCARLET JUNGLE FEVER... I'M SO HOT...
FORGET... THE SCARLET... AND THE HEAT...
TOUCH MY HAND... AND LET... THE INFERNO WITHIN YOU BE... EXTINGUISHED...
"...BY COOL DARKNESS..."
"...BY ENDLESS GREEN..."

BREAK CONTACT..
THE FEVER IS LEAVING HIM...
THE STORM... IS OVER...
HE HAS COME... THROUGH THE NIGHT... AND THE FOREST... OF BLOOD...
HE'LL LIVE.

DAYLIGHT.
A PALE SUN CLIMBS ABOVE THE GRAY TREES.
HE IS ALIVE.
STRUGGLING TO HIS FEET, HE CHECKS HIMSELF.
THERE IS NO PAIN. LOOKING BENEATH HIS SKIN, HE CAN SEE NO BROKEN BONES, NO HOSTILE ORGANISMS THRIVING WITHIN HIS BLOOD.
IN WASHINGTON, A CONGRESSMAN'S WIFE CLEARS HER THROAT AND HE HEARS IT.
IN HARLEM, A BABY WAKES UP CRYING, AND HE HEARS IT.
THE FEVER AND THE WEAKNESS HAVE PASSED.
HE IS SUPERMAN.
HE WONDERS ABOUT THE ROCK. HAD ITS COURSE FROM THE EXPLODED PLANET AVOIDED THE RADIATION BELT THAT WOULD HAVE TRANSFORMED IT TO KRYPTONITE?
NO MATTER. HE KNOWS THAT IT CANNOT HARM HIM NOW.
HE SURVIVED.
LAUNCHING HIMSELF UPWARDS, THE HALF-REMEMBERED FEVER-DREAMS OF THE NIGHT BEFORE DROP AWAY FROM HIM.
HE SURVIVED...

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

SURVIVED, WHEN THERE WAS NO HOPE OF ANOTHER MORNING AS GLORIOUS AS THIS ONE...
SURVIVED, WHEN THERE WAS NO ONE THERE TO HELP HIM.
UPWIND, THERE IS A SPLASH AS A 'GATOR THRASHES ITS TAIL, NOSING OUT INTO THE DEEP WATER.
THE VINE-DRAPED SHADOWS BECKON.
THE ANCIENT TREES WHISPER...
THEIR LEAVES ARE A BURNISHED CRIMSON IN THE FIRST SHAFTS OF DAWN...
NEXT ISSUE/ SUPERMAN AND [illegible] IT'S A DATE!

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
75¢
41
OCT 85
SWAMP THING
BY ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND ALFREDO ALCALA

WHAT DO THEY THINK ABOUT, IN THEIR BEDS BENEATH THE GROUND?
WHAT DO THE DEAD PEOPLE THINK ABOUT?
WHEN THE SUMMER EARTH SWELTERS, WHEN ROOTS PRESS AGAINST THEIR CRACKS LIKE CREASES IN THE BEDSHEETS...
WHEN SLEEP WON'T COME, WHAT NOTIONS DO THEY ENTERTAIN IN THOSE FRAIL PARCHMENT BULBS THAT ONCE WERE SKULLS?
THE PARTY CONTINUES OVERHEAD, WITH SONGS HEARD BEFORE AND DANCES LONG SINCE WEARIED OF.
SLUMBERING BELOW, IS IT A CONSOLATION THAT AS WITH ROOTS AND TREES, ALL THINGS ABOVE ARE DETERMINED BY WHAT LIES BURIED BENEATH?
DREAMING AMONGST THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD, ARE THEY CONTENT? DO THE YELLOWING RIBS STILL GRATE TOGETHER IN A NOSTALGIC PARODY OF BREATH?
DO THE DRY SOCKETS THIRST FOR ONE FINAL GLIMPSE OF SKY?
TONGUELESS, DO THEY FONDLY REPEAT OLD DIALOGUES, HEADSTONES TILTING TOGETHER TO SHARE A GRIEVANCE?
WHAT DO THEY TALK ABOUT, IN THEIR BEDS BENEATH THE GROUND? WHAT DO THE DEAD PEOPLE TALK ABOUT...
... AND WHICH VOICES ARE THE LOUDEST?
1
6-2084

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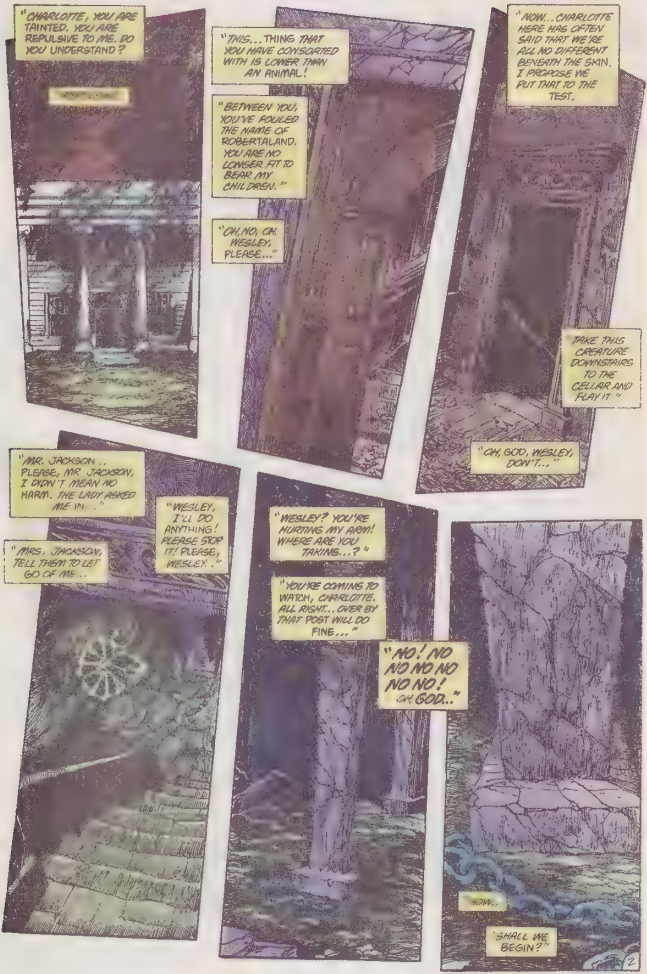
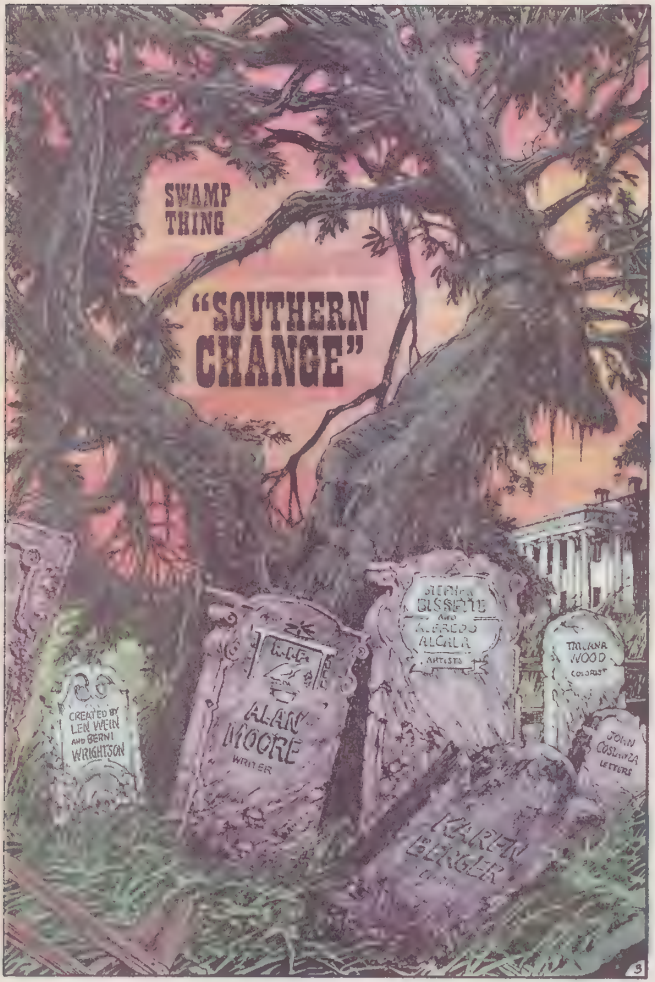
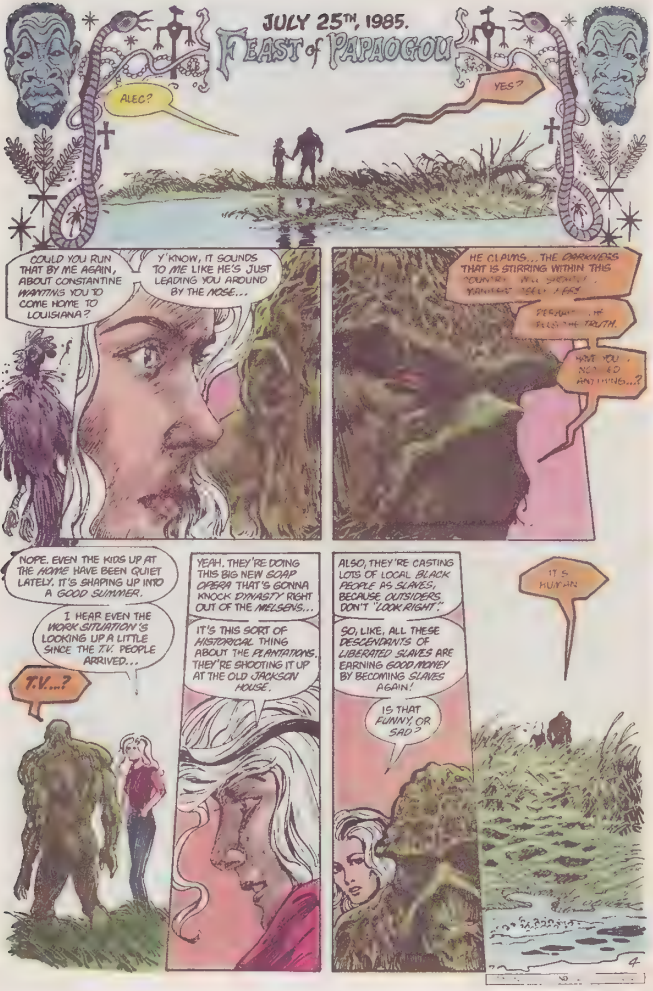
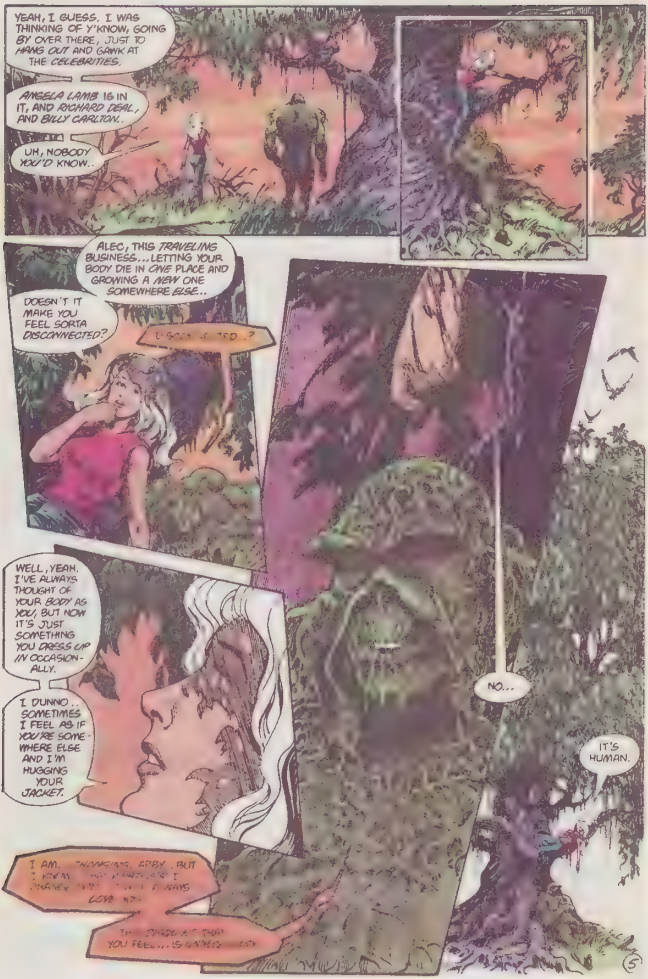

"CHARLOTTE, YOU ARE TAINTED. YOU ARE REPULSIVE TO ME. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
"THIS...THING THAT YOU HAVE CONSORTED WITH IS LOWER THAN AN ANIMAL!
"BETWEEN YOU, YOU'VE FOULED THE NAME OF ROBERTALAND. YOU ARE NO LONGER FIT TO BEAR MY CHILDREN."
"OH, NO, OH, WESLEY, PLEASE..."
"NOW...CHARLOTTE HERE HAS OFTEN SAID THAT WE'RE ALL NO DIFFERENT BENEATH THE SKIN. I PROPOSE WE PUT THAT TO THE TEST.
TAKE THIS CREATURE DOWNSTAIRS TO THE CELLAR AND FLAY IT."
"OH, GOD, WESLEY, DON'T..."
"MR. JACKSON... PLEASE, MR. JACKSON, I DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM. THE LADY ASKED ME IN..."
"MRS. JACKSON, TELL THEM TO LET GO OF ME..."
"WESLEY, I'LL DO ANYTHING! PLEASE STOP IT! PLEASE, WESLEY..."
"WESLEY? YOU'RE HURTING MY ARM! WHERE ARE YOU TAKING...?"
"YOU'RE COMING TO WATCH, CHARLOTTE. ALL RIGHT...OVER BY THAT POST WILL DO FINE..."
"NO! NO NO NO NO NO! OH, GOD..."
"NOW...
"SHALL WE BEGIN?"

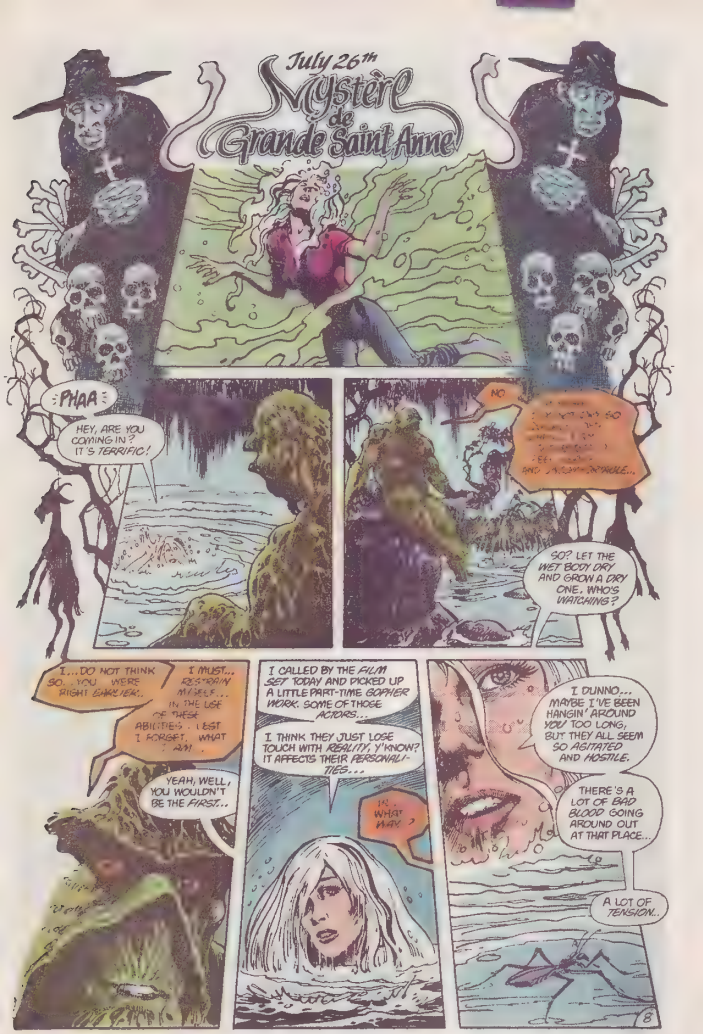

SWAMP THING
"SOUTHERN CHANGE"
CREATED BY LEN WEIN AND BERNI WRIGHTSON
ALAN MOORE WRITER
ALFREDO ALCALA ARTISTS
TATJANA WOOD COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA LETTERS
KAREN BERGER
5


JULY 25TH, 1985.
FEAST of PAPAOGOU
ALEC?
YES?
COULD YOU RUN THAT BY ME AGAIN, ABOUT CONSTANTINE WANTING YOU TO COME HOME TO LOUISIANA?
Y'KNOW, IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE HE'S JUST LEADING YOU AROUND BY THE NOSE...
HE CLAIMS... THE DARKNESS THAT IS STIRRING WITHIN THIS
TRUTH.
NOPE. EVEN THE KIDS UP AT THE HOME HAVE BEEN QUIET LATELY. IT'S SHAPING UP INTO A GOOD SUMMER.
I HEAR EVEN THE WORK SITUATION'S LOOKING UP A LITTLE SINCE THE T.V. PEOPLE ARRIVED...
T.V...?
YEAH. THEY'RE DOING THIS BIG NEW SOAP OPERA THAT'S GONNA KNOCK DYNASTY RIGHT OUT OF THE NELSENS...
IT'S THIS SORT OF HISTORICAL THING ABOUT THE PLANTATIONS. THEY'RE SHOOTING IT UP AT THE OLD JACKSON HOUSE.
ALSO, THEY'RE CASTING LOTS OF LOCAL BLACK PEOPLE AS SLAVES, BECAUSE OUTSIDERS DON'T "LOOK RIGHT."
SO, LIKE, ALL THESE DESCENDANTS OF LIBERATED SLAVES ARE EARNING GOOD MONEY BY BECOMING SLAVES AGAIN!
IS THAT FUNNY, OR SAD?
IT'S HUMAN
4


YEAH, I GUESS. I WAS THINKING OF Y'KNOW, GOING BY OVER THERE, JUST TO HANG OUT AND GAWK AT THE CELEBRITIES.
ANGELA LAMB IS IN IT, AND RICHARD DEAL, AND BILLY CARLTON.
UH, NOBODY YOU'D KNOW.
ALEC, THIS TRAVELING BUSINESS...LETTING YOUR BODY DIE IN ONE PLACE AND GROWING A NEW ONE SOMEWHERE ELSE..
DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU FEEL SORTA DISCONNECTED?
WELL, YEAH. I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF YOUR BODY AS YOU, BUT NOW IT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU CRASS UP IN OCCASIONALLY.
I DUNNO. SOMETIMES I FEEL AS IF YOU'RE SOMEWHERE ELSE AND I'M HUGGING YOUR JACKET.
NO...
IT'S HUMAN.
I AM.
LOVE YOU
YOU FEEL...IS

IT'S HUMAN.
SOMEONE DID SOME TESTS TO MAKE SURE BLOODSTAIN MUST BE MORE THAN A CENTURY OLD...
OH, THAT'S JUST REVOLTING.
WELL, I GUESS THEY'LL CLEAN THE WHOLE PLACE UP BEFORE SHOOTING STARTS, SO IT WON'T OFFEND YOU FOR MUCH LONGER...
WATCH THAT STEP THERE... IT'S ROTTED...
I WISH THEY'D CLEAN UP SOME OF THE EXTRAS.
ANGELA, YOU KNOW THAT'S AN INCREDIBLY RACIST COMMENT...
OH, SO I'M RACIST, BUT CARLTON'S BLACK POWER STUFF IS OKAY BECAUSE HE'S BLACK, RIGHT?
HONESTLY, RICHARD, EVERYTHING HE SAYS, YOU JUST LAP IT UP. IT'S PATHETIC!
OH, NOW LOOK, THAT'S REALLY OVER-SIMPLIFYING A COMPLEX POLITICAL SITUATION...
OH, GOD, RICHARD, GROW UP!
♫ I STAND UP NEXT TO A MOUNTAIN... CHOP IT DOWN WITH THE EDGE O'MY HAND. ♫
♫. SOU STAND UP NEXT TO A MOUNTAIN... CHOP IT DOWN WITH THE EDGE O'MY HAND. ♫
ANYWAY, IF YOU'RE SO AVERSE TO BILLY CARLTON, HOW COME YOU SIGNED UP FOR A SERIES PLAYING LOVE SCENES OPPOSITE HIM?
IF YOU'RE SO AVERSE TO RACISM, HOW COME YOU SIGNED UP TO PLAY A SLAVE BOSS?
I'M DOING IT FOR THE MONEY, YOU TWIT!
PLUS, I GET A STAND-IN FOR THE PHYSICAL CONTACT SCENES...

I DON'T CARE HOW BIG SHE IS, OR HOW GOOD SHE'LL BE FOR THIS SERIES! THAT WOMAN IS A SOW AND A BIGOT, AND I AIN'T TOUCHIN' HER, UNDERSTOOD?
SO WE USE A STAND-IN! NO PROBLEM!
MAN, I DON'T SEE NOTHIN' BUT PROBLEMS! LOOK AT THIS PLACE. HOW LONG'S IT BEEN STANDIN' EMPTY, FALLIN' APART LIKE THIS?
BILLY, WE CAN FIX IT. LISTEN, TRY TO RELAX AROUND THIS SERIES A LITTLE...
FRANKLY, SINCE "BREAKING EVEN" DIDN'T DO SUCH GREAT BOX, YOUR CAREER NEEDS A SERIES LIKE THIS...
THAT'S IRRELEVANT! I'M DOIN' THIS SHOW SO I CAN MAKE A POLITICAL STATEMENT! NOTHING ELSE MATTERS. EXCEPT—
UH...
BILLY?
HEY, BILLY, WHAT'S WITH YOU? YOU SPACED OUT OR SOMETHIN'?
LISTEN, AFTER "BREAKING EVEN" I THOUGHT WE HAD AN AGREEMENT! NO 'BLOW AROUND THE SET, RIGHT?
WHAT?
BILLY, BILLY, BILLY... WHY DO YOU DO THIS TO ME? COME ON... LET'S GET OUTSIDE IN THE FRESH AIR.
AND LISTEN... DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE SERIES, LIKE THE LADY SAID, "TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY."


July 26th
Mystère de Grande Saint Anne
PHAA
HEY, ARE YOU COMING IN? IT'S TERRIFIC!
NO
SO? LET THE WET BODY DRY AND GROW A DRY ONE. WHO'S WATCHING?
I...DO NOT THINK SO...YOU WERE RIGHT EARLIER.
I MUST... RESTRAIN MYSELF... IN THE USE OF THESE ABILITIES. LEST I FORGET. WHAT I AM.
YEAH, WELL, YOU WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST...
I CALLED BY THE FILM SET TODAY AND PICKED UP A LITTLE PART-TIME GOPHER WORK. SOME OF THOSE ACTORS...
I THINK THEY JUST LOSE TOUCH WITH REALITY, Y'KNOW? IT AFFECTS THEIR PERSONALITIES...
IN WHAT WAY?
I DUNNO... MAYBE I'VE BEEN HANGIN' AROUND YOU TOO LONG, BUT THEY ALL SEEM SO AGITATED AND HOSTILE.
THERE'S A LOT OF BAD BLOOD GOING AROUND OUT AT THAT PLACE...
A LOT OF TENSION...
8

FORGET IT!

LISTEN, EITHER THAT LINE GOES OR I GO!

AH IM MOST POWERFUL SORRY, MIZ REBECCA..." JEEZ! YOU SERIOUSLY EXPECT ME TO DO THIS STEPPIN' FETCHIT STUFF?

THAP!

DIRECTOR

BILLY, IT'S EARLY DAYS. ALL WE'RE DOING ARE SOME PRELIMINARY REHEARSALS WHILE THEY RENOVATE THIS DUMP.

WE'RE CERTAINLY NOT CLOSED TO INPUT ON A SCRIPT LEVEL. IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE LINE, WE'LL CHANGE IT.

IF ANYBODY'S OPEN TO MY INPUT, I SAY WE KEEP THE LINE AND GET RID OF HIM!

AN GIE...

YOU HEAR THAT, MAN? YOU THINK I'M GONNA GET DOWN ON MY KNEES AND SAY "AH'M MOST POWERFUL SORRY" TO THE GREAT WHITE WHALE OVER THERE AFTER THAT?

WHAAT?

CHILDREN, PLEASE...

NOW, LISTEN, EVERYBODY. CALM DOWN, OKAY?

WE'LL JUST FINISH RUNNING THROUGH THIS SCENE AND THEN WE'LL CALL IT A DAY.

BILLY... JUST TRY TO DO IT. FOR ME. AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE LINE, IMPROVISE!

YEAH, WELL, JUST THIS ONE BIT, AND THAT'S IT.

FINE, OKAY BILLY, WE'RE READY WHEN YOU ARE...

BILLY?
UHH...
YOU...
YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL...
THAT'S GREAT! IT'S NOT IN THE SCRIPT, BUT IT'S GREAT! DO YOUR LINE SAME AS USUAL, ANGELA...
PLEASE... TH-THOSE ARE NOT PROPER SENTIMENTS FOR SOMEONE OF YOUR STATION...
MISS CHARLOTTE, I...
I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SPEAK OUTTA TURN.
YOU GONNA HAVE TO TELL THE MASTER ABOUT THIS NOW?
N-NO, NO, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY...
TERRIFIC! BILLY, I LOVE THAT NEW DIALOGUE. WE'LL LEAVE IT IN. JUST TRY TO REMEMBER THAT ANGELA'S CHARACTER IS CALLED "REBECCA."
WHERE THE HELL DID "CHARLOTTE" COME FROM?
DIRECTOR DENNIS LINDER
10
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

CHARLOTTE?
BILLY, MY MAN! THAT WAS SOME HOT PERFORMANCE, BRO'..

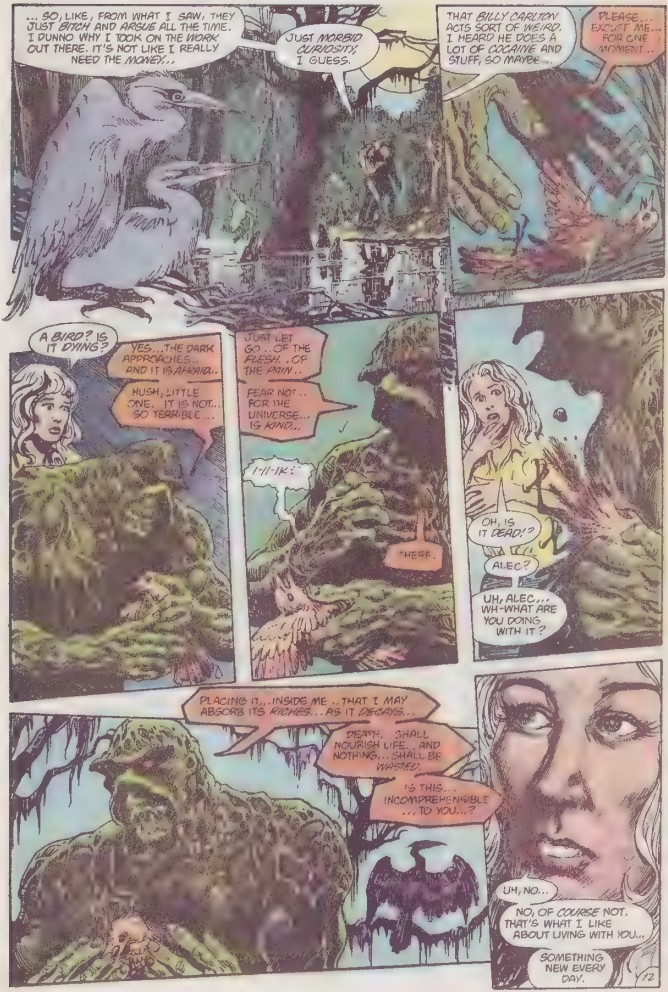
HUH?
HEY, LISTEN, LEAVE ME ALONE, OKAY? AND QUIT WITH ALL THIS "MY MAN" STUFF. US COLORED FOLK DON'T SAY THAT ANYMORE!
B-BUT... BILLY, YOU KNOW I DON'T MEAN TO APPEAR PATRONIZING IN ANY WAY...

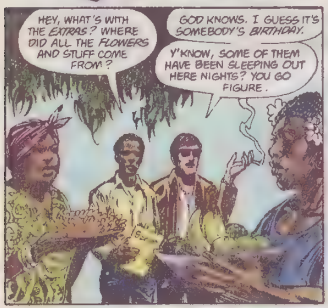
JUST SHOVE IT, OKAY?
I'M GONNA GO GET ME SOME SLEEP, SOMEPLACE AWAY FROM YOU TURKEYS...

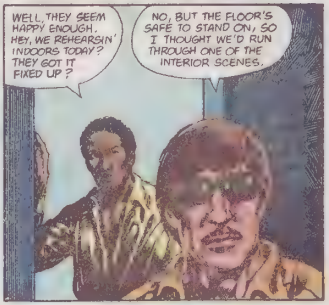
JEEZ, WHAT IS IT WITH THOSE PEOPLE?
MAYBE HE JUST GOT TIRED OF YOU BEING SUCH AN INCORRIGIBLE LIBERAL JERK ALL THE TIME!
Y'KNOW, FOR ONCE, I SYMPATHIZE WITH HIM!

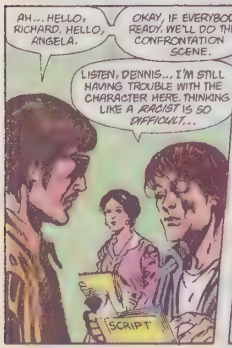
HEY, WHY PICK ON ME? WHAT DID I DO?
C'MON, ANGIE... YOU STILL WANT TO DRIVE DOWN TO NEW ORLEANS FOR SEAFOOD TONIGHT, GET A CHANGE OF SCENERY?
NO, THANKS, RICHARD.

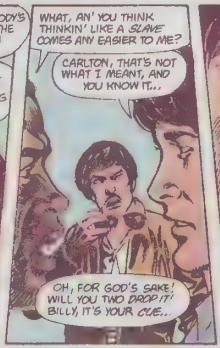
SUDDENLY, I LIKE THE SCENERY AROUND HERE JUST FINE.


...SO, LIKE, FROM WHAT I SAW, THEY JUST BITCH AND ARGUE ALL THE TIME. I DUNNO WHY I TOOK ON THE WORK OUT THERE. IT'S NOT LIKE I REALLY NEED THE MONEY...
JUST MORBID CURIOSITY, I GUESS.
THAT BILLY CARLTON ACTS SORT OF WEIRD. I HEARD HE DOES A LOT OF COCAINE AND STUFF, SO MAYBE...
PLEASE, EXCUSE ME... FOR ONE MOMENT..
A BIRD? IS IT DYING?
YES...THE DARK APPROACHES... AND IT IS AFRAID...
HUSH, LITTLE ONE... IT IS NOT... SO TERRIBLE...
JUST LET GO... OF THE FLESH... OF THE PAIN...
FEAR NOT... FOR THE UNIVERSE... IS KIND...
I-I-IK!
*HEEF.
OH, IS IT DEAD!?
ALEC?
UH, ALEC... WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH IT?
PLACING IT... INSIDE ME... THAT I MAY ABSORB ITS RICHES... AS IT DECAYS...
DEATH, SHALL NOURISH LIFE... AND NOTHING... SHALL BE WASTED.
IS THIS... INCOMPREHENSIBLE... TO YOU...?
UH, NO...
NO, OF COURSE NOT. THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT LIVING WITH YOU...
SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY.
12


HEY, WHAT'S WITH THE EXTRAS? WHERE DID ALL THE FLOWERS AND STUFF COME FROM?
GOD KNOWS. I GUESS IT'S SOMEBODY'S BIRTHDAY.
Y'KNOW, SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN SLEEPING OUT HERE NIGHTS? YOU GO FIGURE.

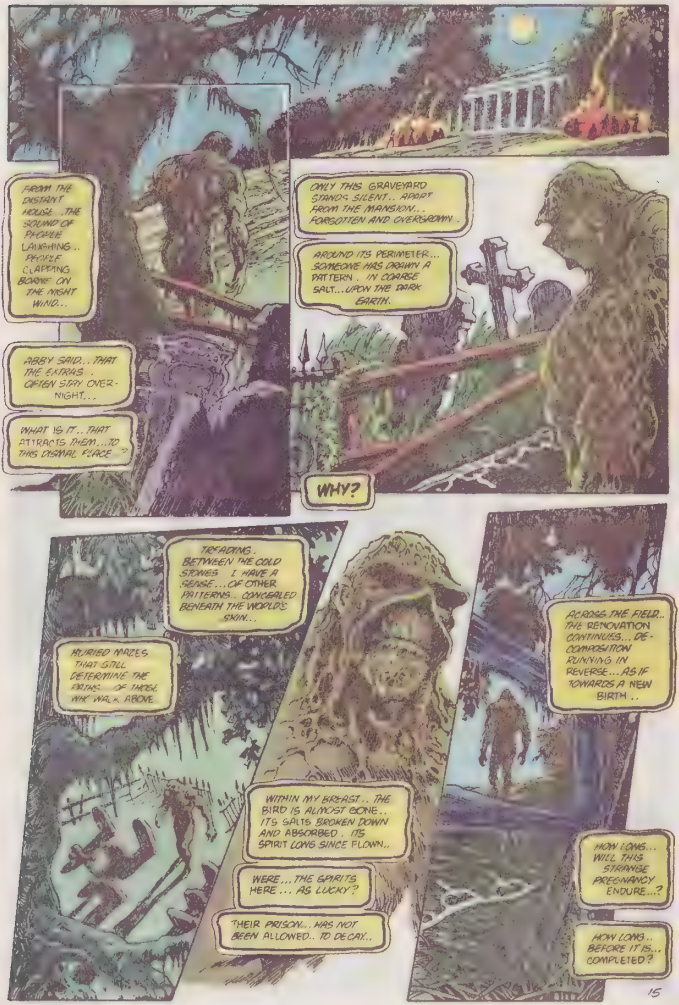

WELL, THEY SEEM HAPPY ENOUGH. HEY, WE REHEARSIN' INDOORS TODAY? THEY GOT IT FIXED UP?
NO, BUT THE FLOOR'S SAFE TO STAND ON, SO I THOUGHT WE'D RUN THROUGH ONE OF THE INTERIOR SCENES.


AH... HELLO, RICHARD. HELLO, ANGELA.
OKAY, IF EVERYBODY'S READY, WE'LL DO THE CONFRONTATION SCENE.
LISTEN, DENNIS... I'M STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE CHARACTER HERE. THINKING LIKE A RACIST IS SO DIFFICULT...
SCRIPT


WHAT, AN' YOU THINK THINKIN' LIKE A SLAVE COMES ANY EASIER TO ME?
CARLTON, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT, AND YOU KNOW IT...
OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE! WILL YOU TWO DROP IT! BILLY, IT'S YOUR CUE..

CONT'NUE ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

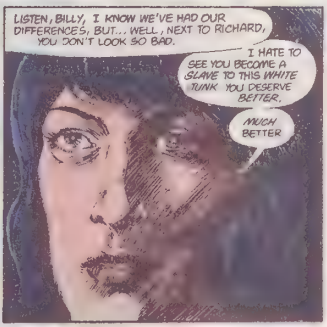
RICHARD?
RICHARD?!
YOU... RESENT...?
HOW DARE YOU?
YOU'RE NOT FIT TO SPEAK TO ME! YOU'RE NOT FIT TO LICK MY SHOES!
IT ISN'T YOUR PLACE TO RESENT ANYTHING!
THAP!
AAAA!
YOU PEOPLE ARE DAMNED LUCKY TO WORK HERE AT ROBERTALAND! DAMNED LUCKY!
THAP! THAP! THAP!
... AND YOU SAID YOU WERE HAVING PROBLEMS! RICHARD, THAT WAS FABULOUS!
ONE THING: WILL EVERYBODY PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ROBERTALAND IS THE NAME OF THE REAL PLANTATION. IN THE SHOW IT'S CALLED "PROVIDENCE."
UHH
B-BILLY?
WHAT HAPPENED? JEEZ, I...I DIDN'T MEAN TO HIT YOU LIKE THAT...
HIT ME? WHAT IS THIS, SOME KINDA HEAD TRIP OR SOMETHIN'? HIT ME WITH WHAT?
UH.
OKAY, EVERYBODY. LET'S TRY SOMETHING FROM THE NEXT SCENE. CUT TO EVENING.


FROM THE DISTANT HOUSE... THE SOUND OF FAERIE LAUGHING.. FAERIE CLAPPING BORNE ON THE NIGHT WIND...
ONLY THIS GRAVEYARD STANDS SILENT... APART FROM THE MANSION... FORGOTTEN AND OVERGROWN..
AROUND ITS PERIMETER... SOMEONE HAS DRAWN A PATTERN... IN COARSE SALT... UPON THE DARK EARTH.
ABBY SAID... THAT THE EXTRAS... OFTEN STAY OVER-NIGHT...
WHAT IS IT... THAT ATTRACTS THEM... TO THIS DISMAL PLACE...?
WHY?
TREADING... BETWEEN THE COLD STONES... I HAVE A SENSE... OF OTHER PATTERNS... CONCEALED BENEATH THE WORLD'S SKIN...
BURIED MAZES... THAT STILL DETERMINE THE PATHS... OF THOSE WHO WALK ABOVE...
ACROSS THE FIELD... THE RENOVATION CONTINUES... DE-COMPOSITION RUNNING IN REVERSE... AS IF TOWARDS A NEW BIRTH...
WITHIN MY BREAST... THE BIRD IS ALMOST GONE... ITS SALTS BROKEN DOWN AND ABSORBED... ITS SPIRIT LONG SINCE FLOWN..
WERE... THE SPIRITS HERE... AS LUCKY?
THEIR PRISON... HAS NOT BEEN ALLOWED... TO DECAY...
HOW LONG... WILL THIS STRANGE PREGNANCY ENDURE...?
HOW LONG... BEFORE IT IS... COMPLETED?

August 25th
Communion Table of
Dan Wedo
ISN'T SHE A BEAUTY?
EVEN WORKING NIGHT AND DAY, I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS HOTEL GOT FIXED UP SO FAST!
I GUESS IT'S LIKE PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS... SOME PLACES JUST HAVE A WILL TO RECOVER...
WHEN DOES THE SHOOTING START?
IN FOUR DAYS TIME, YOU'VE ALL HAD LONG ENOUGH TO REHEARSE AND SOAK UP THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE LOCATION. I FIGURE WE'RE READY.
HMMM.
ONE THING'S FOR SURE... THEY'RE GETTING READY FOR SOMETHING!
THOSE AREN'T SPIRITUALS THEY'RE SINGING OUT THERE, Y'KNOW. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN RELIGIONS...
THOSE PEOPLE... THEY HAD GOOD JOBS AND GOOD PROSPECTS, BUT STICK 'EM OUT HERE, THEY REVERT TO TYPE!
UH... RICHARD? WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?
WHY, THE COLORED, OF COURSE.
WHO ELSE WOULD WE BE TALKING ABOUT?
UH... RICHARD, D-DON'T YOU MEAN "THE EXTRAS"?
SURE. THE EXTRAS. ISN'T THAT WHAT I SAID?
WONDER WHERE THE OTHERS ARE? PROBABLY INSIDE SOMEPLACE, PORING OVER THEIR LINES...
16
CONTINUED ON IND PAG. TO CAINS

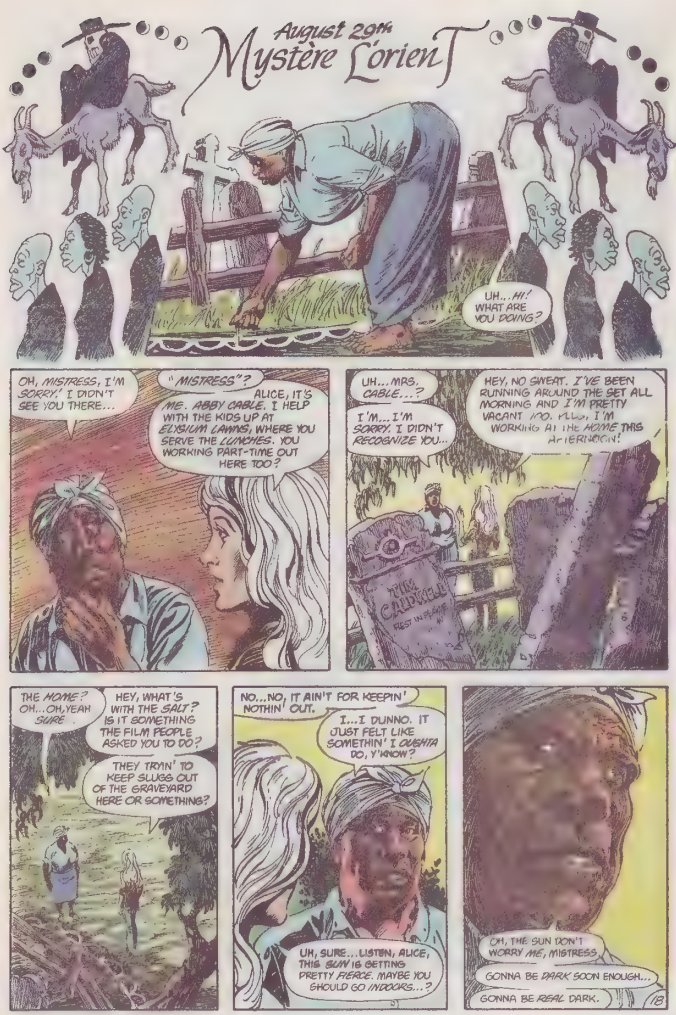
CARLTON? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
OH.
UH, LISTEN...
I'D BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULDN'T TELL MY MANAGER ABOUT THIS. I, UH, I PROMISED I WOULDN'T DO IT AROUND THE SET...

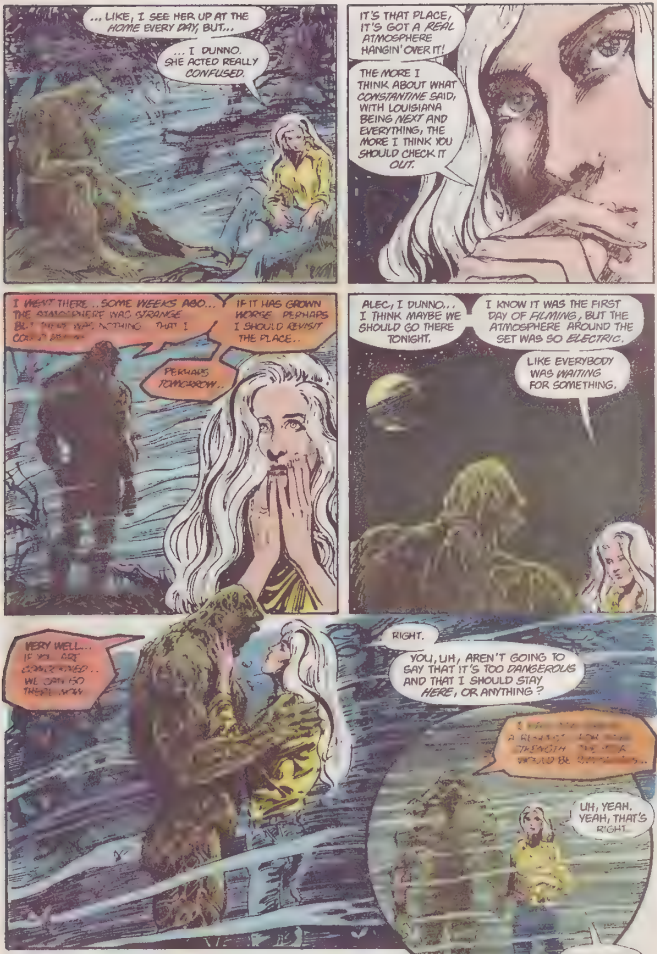
I JUST, UH, I JUST GET KINDA DEPRESSED AROUND HERE. IT'S THIS PLACE, I...
LISTEN, ARE YOU GONNA TELL MY MANAGER?
NO, NO, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.


LISTEN, BILLY, I KNOW WE'VE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES, BUT... WELL, NEXT TO RICHARD, YOU DON'T LOOK SO BAD.
I HATE TO SEE YOU BECOME A SLAVE TO THIS WHITE JUNK. YOU DESERVE BETTER.
MUCH BETTER

I SUPPOSE THAT ONCE SHOOTING STARTS NEXT THURSDAY, WE'LL BE SEEING A LOT OF EACH OTHER. MAYBE I CAN HELP TAKE YOUR MIND OFF THIS STUFF.
WELL, UH, THANKS, CHARLOTTE, I'D LIKE THAT A LOT...

THAT'S "ANGELA."
STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF OUT, BILLY. KEEP AWAY FROM THE WHITE LINES...


August 20th
Mystère L'orient
UH...HI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH, MISTRESS, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE...
"MISTRESS"?
ALICE, IT'S ME. ABBY CABLE. I HELP WITH THE KIDS UP AT ELYSIUM LAWNS, WHERE YOU SERVE THE LUNCHES. YOU WORKING PART-TIME OUT HERE TOO?
UH... MRS. CABLE...?
I'M... I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU...
HEY, NO SWEAT. I'VE BEEN RUNNING AROUND THE SET ALL MORNING AND I'M PRETTY VACANT MYSELF, I'M WORKING AT THE HOME THIS AFTERNOON!
THE HOME? OH... OH, YEAH SURE
HEY, WHAT'S WITH THE SALT? IS IT SOMETHING THE FILM PEOPLE ASKED YOU TO DO?
THEY TRYIN' TO KEEP SLUGS OUT OF THE GRAVEYARD HERE OR SOMETHING?
NO... NO, IT AIN'T FOR KEEPIN' NOTHIN' OUT.
I... I DUNNO. IT JUST FELT LIKE SOMETHIN' I OUGHTA DO, Y'KNOW?
UH, SURE... LISTEN, ALICE, THIS SUN IS GETTING PRETTY FIERCE. MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO INDOORS...?
OH, THE SUN DON'T WORRY ME, MISTRESS
GONNA BE DARK SOON ENOUGH...
GONNA BE REAL DARK.
18


... LIKE, I SEE HER UP AT THE HOME EVERY DAY, BUT...
... I DUNNO. SHE ACTED REALLY CONFUSED.
IT'S THAT PLACE, IT'S GOT A REAL ATMOSPHERE HANGIN' OVER IT!
THE MORE I THINK ABOUT WHAT CONSTANTINE SAID, WITH LOUISIANA BEING NEXT AND EVERYTHING, THE MORE I THINK YOU SHOULD CHECK IT OUT.
I WENT THERE .. SOME WEEKS AGO... THE STANDING'RE WAS STRANGE BUT THERE WAS NOTHING THAT I COULD REMEMBER.
IF IT HAS GROWN WORSE PERHAPS I SHOULD REVISIT THE PLACE..
PERHAPS TOMORROW..
ALEC, I DUNNO... I THINK MAYBE WE SHOULD GO THERE TONIGHT.
I KNOW IT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF FILMING, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE AROUND THE SET WAS SO ELECTRIC.
LIKE EVERYBODY WAS WAITING FOR SOMETHING.
VERY WELL... IF YOU ARE CONVINCED... WE CAN GO THERE NOW.
RIGHT.
YOU, UH, AREN'T GOING TO SAY THAT IT'S TOO DANGEROUS AND THAT I SHOULD STAY HERE, OR ANYTHING?
UH, YEAH. YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.
RIDICULOUS.

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SHOOTING NIGHT FOOTAGE AND EVERYBODY WANTS TO PARTY!
WHO GAVE ANYBODY PERMISSION TO LIGHT THESE FIRES?
WHERE'S CHARLOTTE?
WHAT?
I SAID "WHERE'S ANGELA?" I HAVEN'T SEEN HER AROUND ANYPLACE...
OH, WHO CARES? THIS WHOLE SHOW IS OUT OF CONTROL! NOBODY TAKES ANY NOTICE OF ME...
I MEAN, THAT COSTUME YOU'RE WEARING. IT ISN'T THE ONE I SPECIFIED...
DENNIS, I ASKED IF YOU'D SEEN ANGELA!
UH...WELL, YEAH, I THOUGHT I SAW HER AND BILLY GO INSIDE EARLIER ON. WHAT OF IT?
ANYWAY, I THOUGHT SHE'D BEEN GIVIN' YOU THE COLD SHOULDER LATELY. WHY...?
INSIDE? TOGETHER??
YEAH, SO WHAT? LISTEN, RICHARD, I DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH THIS MADNESS! MY CONTRACT SAYS I NEEDN'T TOLERATE UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOR! WANNA READ IT?
YOU TWO! COME WITH ME!
RIGHT AWAY, MISTER WESLEY...
SNAP
IT'S IN MY CONTRACT, RICHARD!
IN BLACK AND WHITE!

BILLY?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
I... I DUNNO. I JUST FEEL LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ALL THIS... Y'KNOW, WITH YOU AND ME AND EVERYTHING...
IT'S BEEN AS HARD FOR ME, COMING TO TERMS WITH THIS.
LOOK AT ME, BILLY...
WE'RE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, BUT WE CAN OVERCOME THAT...
TONIGHT IS SPECIAL.
TONIGHT THERE'S JUST US, WILLIAM. THE REST OF THE WORLD DOESN'T MATTER.
MISS CHARLOTTE, I'M SO AFRAID...
JUST HOLD ME, WILLIAM. NOTHING WILL HAPPEN, I PROMISE YOU. EVERYTHING WILL BE..
...FINE
WELL, WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

R-RICHARD?
RICHARD, WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE? WHAT ARE ALL THESE FIRES FOR?
ABBY, YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT THIS PLACE..
THERE IS SOMETHING ROTTEN HERE..
CHARLOTTE, YOU ARE TAINTED. YOU ARE REPULSIVE TO ME. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
REPULSIVE.
OH, THAT'S SICK! ALEC, LOOK WHAT THEY'RE DOING TO THAT CHICKEN..
THEY DO NOT NOTICE US. THERE IS SOMETHING... POSSESSING THEM...
SOMETHING... INHUMAN..
THIS...THING THAT YOU HAVE CONSORTED WITH IS LOWER THAN AN ANIMAL!
BETWEEN YOU, YOU'VE FOULED THE NAME OF ROBERTA-LAND. YOU ARE NO LONGER FIT TO BEAR MY CHILDREN
WHAM
OH NO. OH, WESLEY, PLEASE..
PLEASE, MR. LINDER? CAN SOMEBODY TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?
I...I DON'T KNOW. I CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT... I KEEP GETTING PICTURES IN MY HEAD...
TERRIBLE PICTURES...ALL THAT BLOOD...ALL THAT CRUELTY...
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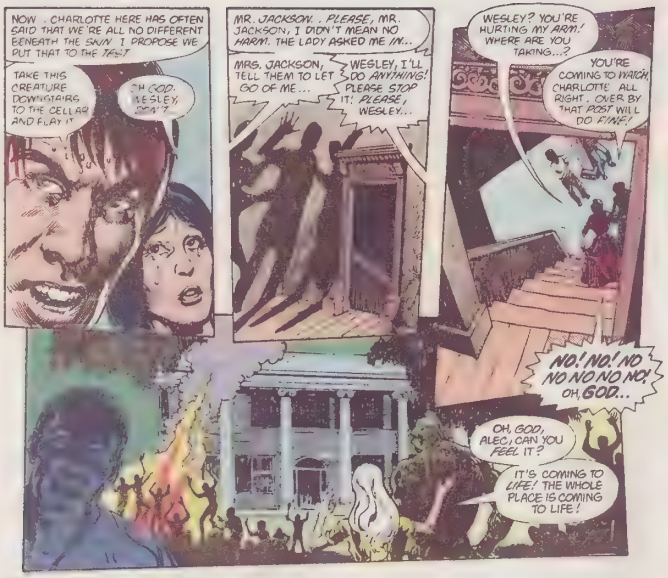
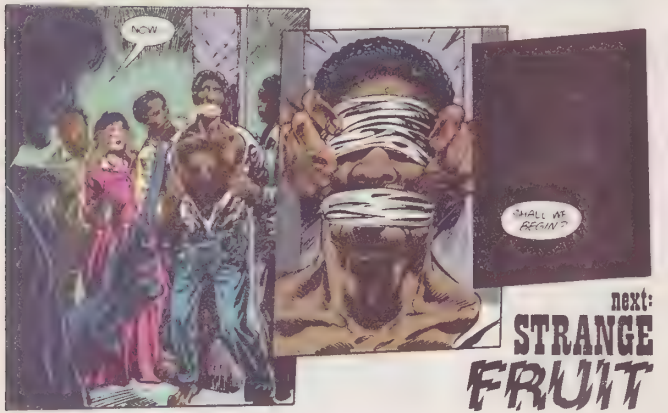

NOW . CHARLOTTE HERE HAS OFTEN SAID THAT WE'RE ALL NO DIFFERENT BENEATH THE SKIN. I PROPOSE WE PUT THAT TO THE TEST
TAKE THIS CREATURE DOWNSTAIRS TO THE CELLAR AND FLAY IT
OH GOD, WESLEY, DON'T!
MR. JACKSON. . PLEASE, MR. JACKSON, I DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM. THE LADY ASKED ME IN...
MRS. JACKSON, TELL THEM TO LET GO OF ME...
WESLEY, I'LL DO ANYTHING! PLEASE STOP IT! PLEASE, WESLEY...
WESLEY? YOU'RE HURTING MY ARM! WHERE ARE YOU TAKING...?
YOU'RE COMING TO WATCH, CHARLOTTE. ALL RIGHT. OVER BY THAT POST WILL DO FINE!
NO! NO! NO NO NO NO NO! OH, GOD...
OH, GOD, ALEC, CAN YOU FEEL IT?
IT'S COMING TO LIFE! THE WHOLE PLACE IS COMING TO LIFE!



next:
STRANGE FRUIT

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
SWAMP THING
42
75¢
CAN 95¢
U.K. 35p
NOV. 85
1935
50
DC
1985
BY
ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

HE TRIED...

(A CENTURY OF STARING AT THE CEILING, LONGING TO STRETCH, TO YAWN WITHOUT THE JAW FALLING OFF, LONGING TO RUB THE COBWEBS FROM YOUR SOCKETS WITH YELLOWED KNUCKLES.)

... AND TRIED...

(A DECADE COUNTING THE NAILS, OVER AND OVER; A DECADE STUDYING THE GROWTH OF A SINGLE FUNGUS; FIFTY YEARS STRUGGLING TO REMEMBER WHAT PEACHES SMELLED LIKE.

... AND TRIED...

(GENERATION AFTER GENERATION OF BEETLES PASS BEFORE YOUR UNBLINKING GAZE. YOU WATCH THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THEIR MINIATURE DYNASTIES, MAKING UP NAMES FOR EACH CHARACTER, OFTEN REPEATING YOURSELF)

... BUT IT WAS NO GOOD.

HE COULDN'T SLEEP.

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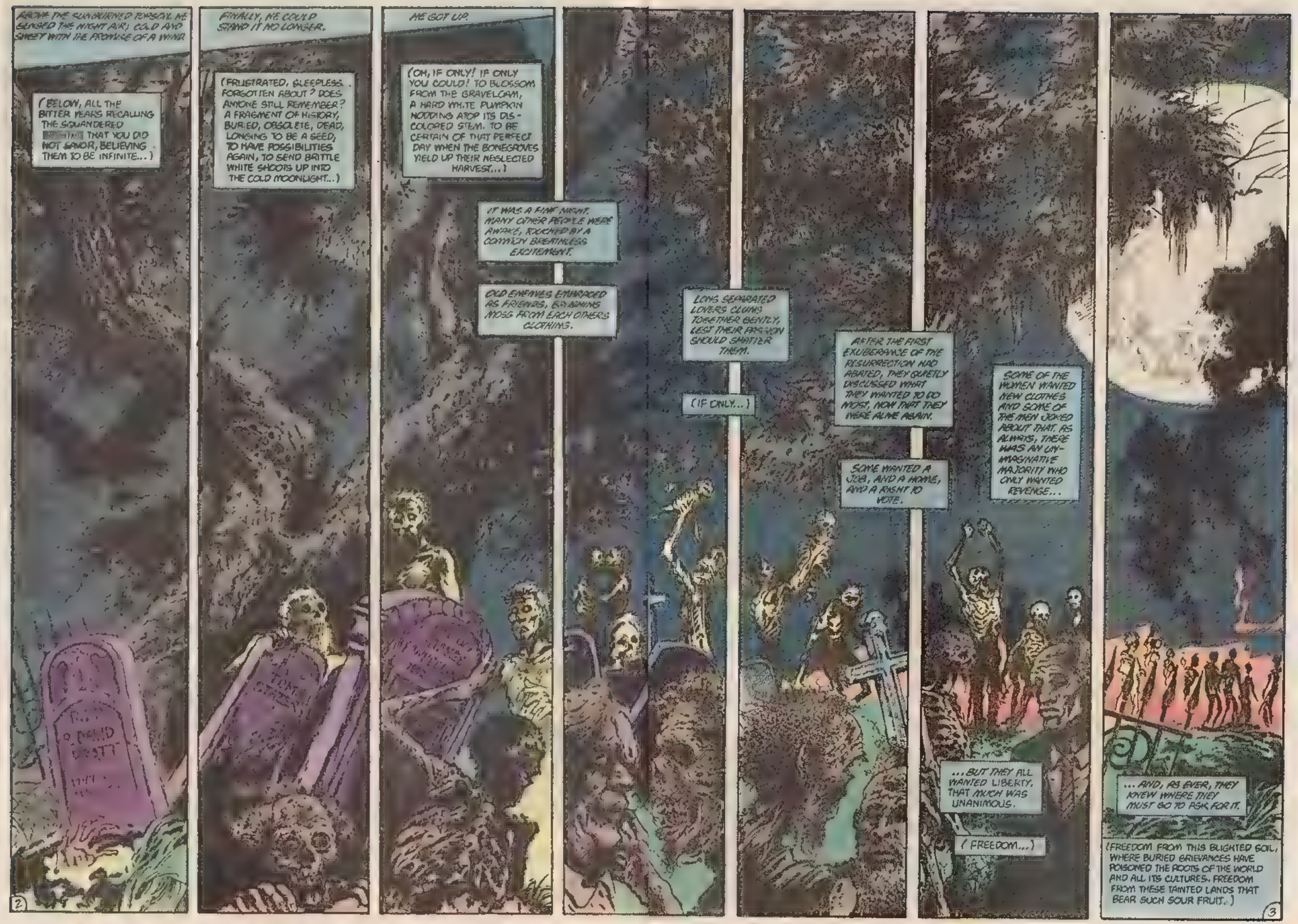

ABOVE THE SUNBURNED RUBBLE, HE SENSED THE NIGHT AIR, COLD AND SWEET WITH THE PROMISE OF A WIND.
(BELOW, ALL THE BITTER YEARS RECALLING THE SQUANDERED [illegible] THAT YOU DID NOT SAVOR, BELIEVING THEM TO BE INFINITE...)
FINALLY, HE COULD STAND IT NO LONGER.
(FRUSTRATED, SLEEPLESS... FORGOTTEN ABOUT? DOES ANYONE STILL REMEMBER? A FRAGMENT OF HISTORY, BURIED, OBSOLETE, DEAD, LONGING TO BE A SEED, TO HAVE POSSIBILITIES AGAIN, TO SEND BRITTLE WHITE SHOOTS UP INTO THE COLD MOONLIGHT...)
HE GOT UP.
(OH, IF ONLY! IF ONLY YOU COULD! TO BLOSSOM FROM THE GRAVELOAM, A HARD WHITE PUMPKIN NODDING ATOP ITS DISCOLORED STEM. TO BE CERTAIN OF THAT PERFECT DAY WHEN THE BONEGROVES YIELD UP THEIR NEGLECTED HARVEST...)
IT WAS A FINE NIGHT. MANY OTHER PEOPLE WERE AWAKE, TOUCHED BY A COMMON BREATHLESS EXCITEMENT.
OLD ENEMIES EMBRACED AS FRIENDS, EXAMINING MOSS FROM EACH OTHERS CLOTHING.
LONG SEPARATED LOVERS CLUNG TOGETHER GENTLY, LEST THEIR PASSION SHOULD SHATTER THEM.
(IF ONLY...)
AFTER THE FIRST EXUBERANCE OF THE RESURRECTION HAD ABATED, THEY QUIETLY DISCUSSED WHAT THEY WANTED TO DO MOST, NOW THAT THEY WERE ALIVE AGAIN.
SOME WANTED A JOB, AND A HOME, AND A RIGHT TO VOTE.
SOME OF THE WOMEN WANTED NEW CLOTHES AND SOME OF THE MEN JOKED ABOUT THAT. AS ALWAYS, THERE WAS AN UNIMAGINATIVE MAJORITY WHO ONLY WANTED REVENGE...
...BUT THEY ALL WANTED LIBERTY. THAT MUCH WAS UNANIMOUS.
(FREEDOM...)
...AND, AS EVER, THEY KNEW WHERE THEY MUST GO TO ASK FOR IT.
(FREEDOM FROM THIS BLIGHTED SOIL, WHERE BURIED GRIEVANCES HAVE POISONED THE ROOTS OF THE WORLD AND ALL ITS CULTURES. FREEDOM FROM THESE TAINTED LANDS THAT BEAR SUCH SOUR FRUIT...)
2
3

SWAMP THING

CREATED BY LEN WEIN AND BERNI WRIGHTSON

STRANGE FRUIT

ALAN MOORE: WRITER

BISSETTE, TOTLEBEN, & RANDALL : ARTISTS
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR
TATJANA WOOD: COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA · LETTERER

CONTINUED ON 3rd PAGE COLUMN 3

ALEC... THIS ISN'T JUST SOME *STUNT* TO DO WITH THE *T.V. SERIES* THEY'RE SHOOTING, IS IT?

THERE'S THAT *CLAMMINESS* IN THE AIR, LIKE WHEN WE TACKLED THE *MONKEY CREATURE.*

WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S *GOING* THIS?

I *FEEL* SOMETHING... IN THE *LAND* HERE... DIFFICULT TO *DESCRIBE...*

AS IF A PATTERN ...HAS BEEN ETCHED UPON THIS PLACE... BY *SMOTHERING*, SO *FIERCE* AND *CAUSTIC*, THAT THEY *IMPRINTED* THE *IMPRINT* INTO THE SOIL ITSELF...

"*AND EVEN THOUGH*... ITS *DESIGN*... IS *LONG SINCE* BURIED... IT STILL *GUIDES* THE *FOOTSTEPS*... OF THOSE WHO *TREAD*... THE *WORLD ABOVE.*"

B-BUT THESE *EXTRAS!* THEY'RE JUST *ORDINARY LOCAL PEOPLE* AND THEY'RE DOING SOME SORT OF *VOODOO* OR SOMETHING! IT'S AS IF...

HEY, *LOOK!* THERE'S *ALICE!*

ALICE...?

SHE HELPS WITH *LUNCH* AT *ELYSIUM LAWNS*. I *MET* HER OUT HERE THIS *MORNING*. MAYBE *SHE* COULD TELL US WHAT'S *HAPPENING*.

ALICE? HEY! WAIT *UP!*

AHOY.. BE *CAREFUL*... THE *MALIGNANCY* HERE .. IS *GATHERING*... ITS *POWER*..

"*CALLING*... *ALL ITS* CHILDREN... *HOME AGAIN*..."

HELLO, ALICE? IT'S ME. ABBY CABLE. YOU REMEMBER?

SALT... HAVE TO GO LAY SOME MORE SALT...

SALT? WHAT, LIKE YOU WERE DOING AROUND THE CEMETERY THIS MORNING? ALICE, LISTEN, WHAT'S...?

THE WIND WILLA BLOWED IT AWAY! BLOWED THE SALT PATTERN AWAY I GOTTA GO. GOTTA PUT DOWN SOME MORE...

"IT'S THE SALT, SEE?

"IT'S THE SALT WHAT KEEPS 'EM IN!"

ALICE, LISTEN... SOMETHING S DOING THIS TO YOU. THIS PLACE. IT'S AFFECTING YOUR MIND...

LOOK, WHERE ARE THE ACTORS? MR. DEAL AND MS. LAMB?

INSIDE... WHITE FOLKS ALL INSIDE NOW. I GOTTA GO. GOTTA GO LAY SALT...

ALEC, SHE'S RAVING. CAN YOU FOLLOW HER AND SEE SHE'S OKAY? I'LL GET EVERYBODY OUTTA THE HOUSE AND THEN MAYBE WE CAN EVACUATE THIS PLACE.

YES.. BUT WE MUST HURRY..

I SENSE... AN APPROACHING DARKNESS..

SOMEBODY COMIN', MR. JACKSON. I JUST HEARD THE DOOR, UPSTAIRS...

AHH, THAT WILL BE MY DINNER GUESTS ARRIVING

I'VE INVITED ALMOST EVERYBODY. IT SHOULD BE A NIGHT TO REMEMBER.

OH, GOD. OH, NO. WESLEY, PLEASE...

CHARLOTTE, PLEASE COMPOSE YOURSELF WE HAVE TO GO UPSTAIRS NOW, AND GREET OUR VISITORS.

AND PLEASE... TRY TO SMILE. I KNOW I SHALL.

OH, NO.

OH, GOD, WESLEY, WHAT DID YOU DO? PLEASE... PLEASE, YOU CAN'T LEAVE HIM. YOU CAN'T LEAVE HIM LIKE THAT!

WESLEY, HE'S ALIVE!

OH, GOD.

STILL ALIVE...

GOOD. PERHAPS HE'LL TELL THE REST OF THOSE APES WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRY TO STEAL A MARCH ON OL' WES JACKSON.

NOW GET UPSTAIRS AN' STOP WHIMPERING. I WON'T HAVE YOU UPSETTING OUR...

...VISITORS.

UH... HI.

MR. DEAL? MS. LAMB?

LOOK, I'M SORRY, YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUT THERE'S SOME KINDA *TROUBLE* GOING ON OUTSIDE, AND I THOUGHT MAYBE IT WOULD BE *SAFER* IF YOU, UH...

UHH..

WH-WHAT'S...?

TH-THE HOUSE... IT'S *CHANGING!* WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

MY GOD. SHE'S WEARING *TROUSERS.*

CHARLOTTE, IS THIS SOME FRIEND OF YOURS, THIS WOMAN WHO DRESSES LIKE A *MAN*?

CHARLOTTE? WHO'S CHARLOTTE?

LOOK, YOU DON'T HAVE *TIME* TO FOOL AROUND. THIS WHOLE *PLACE* IS GOING CRAZY!

WHERE'S *BILLY CARLTON?* WASN'T *ME* IN HERE, TOO?

WILLIAM, OH, MY POOR WILLIAM...

HE SKINNED HIM. OH, GOD, OH, GOD, DOWN IN THE CELLAR...

SKINNED HIM WITH *THIS.*

CONTINUED ON 25TH PAGE SO ONWARD

GIVE ME THAT, YOU ADULTEROUS, SLAVE-LOVING...

AAAA!

SKINNED...?

OH GOD. OH, GOD, WHAT'S THIS PLACE DONE TO YOU PEOPLE?

DONE? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? ROBERTA-LAND IS OUR HOME. OUR WAY OF LIFE.

SHE PROTECTS US...

...JUST AS WE HAVE TO PROTECT HER REPUTATION FROM LOUD-MOUTHED OUTSIDERS WHO BUTT IN ON FAMILY DISAGREEMENTS.

OH, JEEZ.

LISTEN...PLEASE LISTEN. YOUR NAME IS RICHARD DEAL. YOU'RE AN ACTOR.

NONE OF THIS IS REAL.

UUH.

UUHHHH...

IS THAT SO?

COME ON...LET'S GO AND SEE WHAT ALL THAT SCREECHING AND HOLLERING OUTSIDE IS ABOUT. THOSE SAVAGES ARE KICKING UP A FIT TO WAKE THE DEAD...

OH, LORD.

OH, LORD, I'M SORRY. I'M TOO OLD, I'M TOO SLOW...

THEY ALL AWAKE. ALL OF 'EM...

PLEASE... Y'ALL GOTTA GO BACK TO SLEEP! IT AIN'T THE DAY. NOT YET.

D'Y'UNNERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYIN'?

CAN'T ANY O' YOU FOLK TALK NO MORE?

ALICE...?

ALICE... THAT YOU...?

DADDY?

OH...

OH, I REMEMBER... WE COULDN'T AFFORD NO PROPER PLOT, SO MOMMA HAD YOU BURIED IN THE OL' SLAVE GRAVEYARD...

I--I WAS A LITTLE GIRL. YOU USED TO SAY HOW PUH-PRETTY I WAS...

OH, DADDY...

DADDY, I'M ALL OLD! I'M ALL UGLY AND OLD!

WHY'D YOU HAVE TO WAKE UP AND SEE ME LIKE *THIS*?

ALICE... LITTLE ALICE...

COULDN'T SLEEP IN THAT PLACE... COULDN'T DECAY IN PEACE... NONE OF US COULD... TOO MUCH LEFT *UNSETTLED*...

TONIGHT... WE ARE GOING... TO DEMAND... OUR FREEDOM...

LET ME... WALK THERE... WITH *YOU*...

BEAUTIFUL ALICE.

BEAUTIFUL BABY...

THE PARADE MOVES PAST... AND DOES NOT NOTICE ME...

AS IF... I AM NOT PART... OF THE DREAM THAT THEY WALK *SUBMERGED* IN...

THE DREAM OF A DEAD PLACE FONDLY RECALLING OLD AND CHERISHED HORRORS...

THIS ISN'T REAL.
IT DOESN'T HURT.
I DON'T FEEL WET.
I'M NOT REALLY BLEEDING
SHUK
UH...
MS. LAMB?
STROING
LISTEN, I'M GOING DOWN TO THE CELLAR TO GET MR. CARLTON, THEN WE'RE GETTING OUTSIDE.
NO! YOU DIDN'T SEE HIM. OH, GOD, DON'T MAKE ME LOOK AT HIM AGAIN!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. THEY SKINNED HIM!
SHIK!
WITH THIS?

CHEAP TRICKS!

CHEAP TRICKS AND CHICKEN BLOOD!

I'VE WARNED YOU PEOPLE...

I'VE TOLD YOU I WON'T HAVE THIS DEVIL WORSHIP AROUND ROBERTALAND! NOW PUT OUT THESE FIRES AND GET BACK TO YOUR SHACKS...

SPECIAL NIGHT FOR US, MR. JACKSON. IS MYSTÈRE L'ORIENT!

ZOMBIE WALK TONIGHT.

ZOMBIE?

GOD, YOU'RE LIKE CHILDREN! DON'T YOU REALIZE THIS IS 1842? NOW GET BACK TO YOUR HOMES BEFORE I OPEN FIRE, THE WAY I DID..

...BUT I REMEMBER...FIRING ON THE CROWD...HIT A WOMAN IN THE STOMACH. AND...

...THE LAST TIME THIS HAPPENED.

UH...

NO, NO, THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT... THIS HASN'T HAPPENED BEFORE. BUT...

...AND THEN... THEN THE BLACKS ATTACKED ME, AND I... FIRED THE OTHER BARREL, BUT... TOO MANY OF THEM... THEY...

THEY... BEAT ME...

...TO DEATH.

OH, GOD.

DEAR GOD, WHERE AM I?

YOU ARE BACK... IN THE PLACE... OF PAIN, WESLEY JACKSON...

WE ARE *ALL*.. BACK IN THE PLACE OF PAIN...

...BECAUSE THE PAIN... CANNOT BE *BURIED*.. AND *FORGOTTEN*...

THE PAIN... CANNOT REMAIN IN THE *PAST*.. OR HIDDEN BENEATH THE *SOIL*...

THAT WHICH IS *BURIED*... IS NOT *GONE*. THAT WHICH IS *PLANTED*.. WILL *GROW*...

THERE IS A *WEED*... THAT *THRIVES* UPON *NEGLECT*, AND *FLOURISHES* IN *DARKNESS*...

UNTENDED, IT BECOMES A *TREE* OF *NIGHT*...

...AND ITS BOUGHS *SAG*... BENEATH THE UNBEARABLE *WEIGHT*... OF WHAT IT HAS BROUGHT *FORTH*.

WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?

WE WANT OUR FREEDOM...

AND IF FREEDOM IS NOT GIVEN... THEN WE MUST ALL... REPEAT THIS NIGHT... OF PAIN AND SUFFERING UNTIL FREEDOM COMES... EVEN IF THAT TAKES FOREVER...

THE DEAD... HAVE FOREVER...

THIS.. THIS IS MY LAND. THIS IS THE WAY OF LIFE MY FAMILY WORKED FOR.

YOU CAN GO TO HELL.

YOU... ARE THERE... ALREADY...

ALL OF YOU...

YOU'LL JUST BREAK... THIS TERRIBLE CYCLE

THE PATTERN YOU LAID DOWN, SO LONG AGO, HAS GROWN INTO A MAZE... THAT TRAPS THE LIVING...

GET BACK TO WHATEVER HEATHEN INFERNO SPAWNED YOU, CREATURE. I WILL NOT HAVE THIS JU JU ON MY LAND!

KAPOOM!

NO.. THE ATROCITY THAT HAPPENED HERE.. MUST NOT BE REPEATED...

I WILL NOT... TOLERATE...

ALEC? IT'S OKAY! I GOT 'EM OUT! THEY'RE BOTH IN SHOCK, BUT...

OH, JEEZ.

SLUNCH

ALEC! OH, GOD, WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT HERE?

THE SHIT HAS BEEN HIRED... AS BEFORE.

BAM!

IT BEGINS AGAIN...

NO!

I WILL NOT...

.. ALLOW

...THIS EVIL...

..TO CONTINUE!

NO! NOT MY HOUSE!

IT'S ALL THAT'S DEAR TO ME! YOU CAN'T...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE TO COME

IF THE BAD TREE IS TO BE DESTROYED... YOU MUST NOT BURY... ITS FRUIT...

YOU MUST BURN OUT THE ROOTS.

THE FIRE CONSUMES ME... CRACKLING LIKE A CURRENT... DOWN WIRES... OF SUMMER-PARCHED CREEPER...

FOR AN INSTANT.. I RECALL... ANOTHER MAN... WHO BURNED. HIS FEAR.. HIS SUFFERING.. WELLING UP FROM MY BORROWED MEMORY...

HOLLAND!

HOLLAND DIED LIKE THIS.

THE RECOLLECTION VANISHES... INTO SEARING REDNESS...

...I SEE WEARY CADAVERS... RUSHING TO EMBRACE... THE CONSUMING... LIBERATING FLAME...

I SEE... A MANSION.. TURN TO BLACK CINDER WHILE A WHITE MAN SCREAMS WITHIN IT...

AND THEN GREEN.

ONLY GREEN.

THLEP!
SLUPP
GWIP
PIVOC
HI.
Y KNOW. YOU MISSED ONE HELL OF A FIRE
YES.
WHY, IS EVERYONE... STILL STANDING AROUND?
THEY'RE IN SHOCK. C'MON. I ALREADY CALLED AN AMBULANCE WE BETTER GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE SOMEBODY REALIZES YOU'RE NOT AN HALLUCINATION...
I THINK MOST OF 'EM WILL BE OKAY. I FOUND ALICE AND SHE ONLY REMEMBERS IT AS SOME KINDA DREAM
THEY'LL BLOCK OUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE AND GET ON WITH THEIR LIVES.
THEY'LL BE OKAY...
17

...MOST OF 'EM.

BILLY? BILLY, MY LOVE, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT IT'S ME.

IT'S ANGIE.

HUUUGH..

BILLY...I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO US..

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE YOUR MIND, BUT .

NUHHUH .

BUT OH GOD, THIS NIGHTMARE... THIS HORROR! I LOOKED INTO THE HEART OF IT, BILLY, AND...

AND IT KNEW ME!

UH

AUHUH...

I KNEW WHAT I WAS, AND, AND IT KNEW WHAT I WAS, TOO, AND OH, BILLY, I DON'T WANT TO BE THAT WAY ANY MORE.

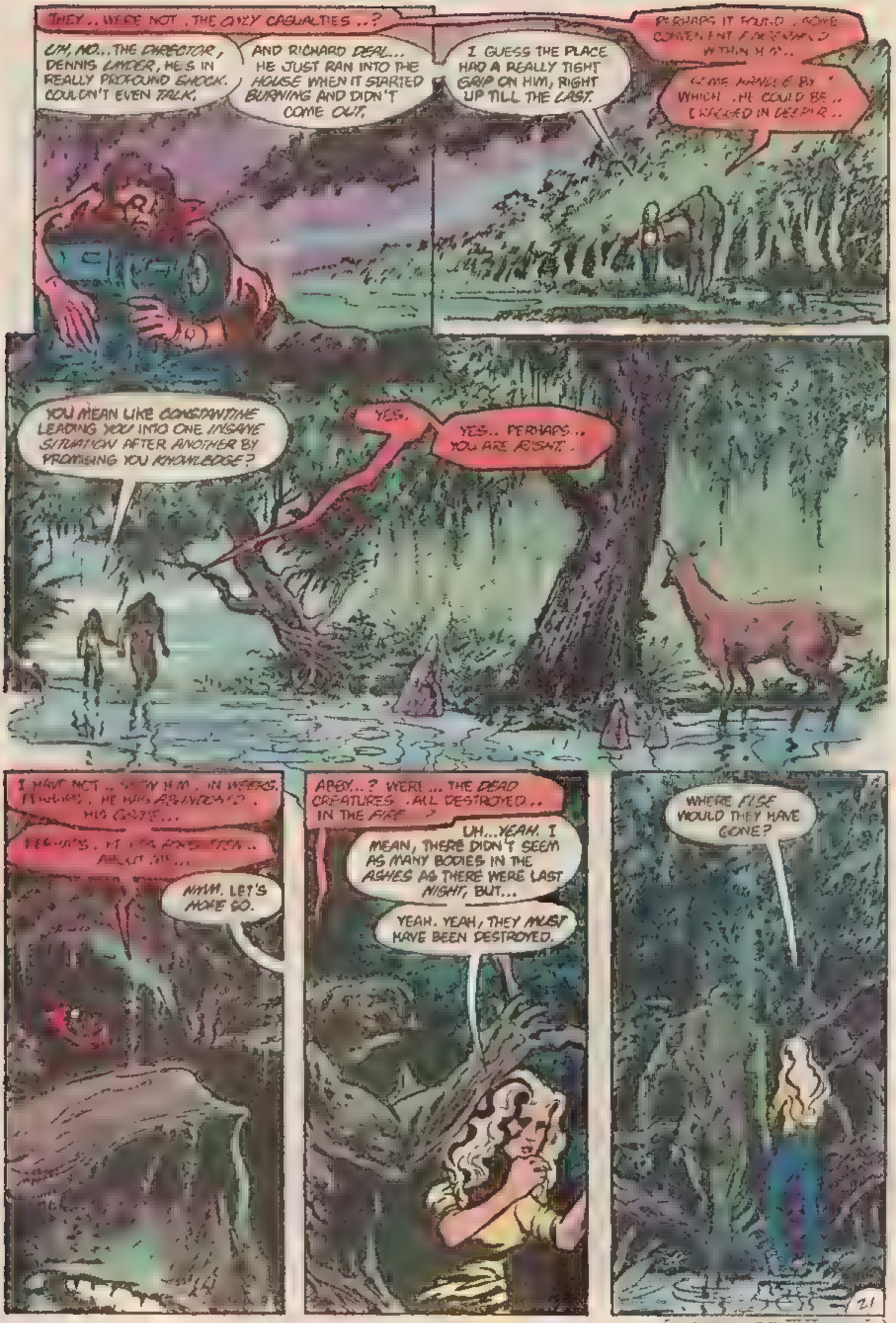
BILLY, EVERYTHING FEELS SO MUCH DIFFERENT...

OOUH .

..AND I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU GET BETTER, AND IT'S ALL GOING TO BE OKAY I PROMISE. I PROMISE ALL THE HURT WILL STOP AND IT WILL ALL BE OKAY

OH, BILLY.

OH, MY LOVE.


THEY.. WERE NOT.. THE ONLY CASUALTIES..?
UH, NO... THE DIRECTOR, DENNIS UNDER, HE'S IN REALLY PROFOUND SHOCK. COULDN'T EVEN TALK.
AND RICHARD DEAL... HE JUST RAN INTO THE HOUSE WHEN IT STARTED BURNING AND DIDN'T COME OUT.
I GUESS THE PLACE HAD A REALLY TIGHT GRIP ON HIM, RIGHT UP TILL THE LAST.
YOU MEAN LIKE CONSTANTINE LEADING YOU INTO ONE INSANE SITUATION AFTER ANOTHER BY PROMISING YOU KNOWLEDGE?
YES.
YES.. PERHAPS... YOU ARE RIGHT.
NMM. LET'S HOPE SO.
ABBY...? WERE... THE DEAD CREATURES.. ALL DESTROYED... IN THE FIRE...?
UH...YEAH. I MEAN, THERE DIDN'T SEEM AS MANY BODIES IN THE ASHES AS THERE WERE LAST NIGHT, BUT...
YEAH. YEAH, THEY MUST HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.
WHERE ELSE WOULD THEY HAVE GONE?
21

AW, NO! THIS IS A DISASTER! EVERYBODY GETS DRUNK OR SOMETHIN', THE SET BURNS DOWN, THE LEADIN' MAN'S DEAD...
...AN' NOW SOMEBODY'S RIPPED OFF MY CAMERA TRUCK!
WELL, HIRIN' THESE KINDA PEOPLE AS EXTRAS, THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN. I MEAN, HELL, I AIN'T NO BIGOT, BUT...
AW, NO! SOME JERK WHO PROBABLY CAN'T DRIVE? IN MY CAMERA TRUCK?
WHAT IF THEY SCRATCH MY LENSES?
JUST OUTSIDE MONROE, 11:47 A.M.
NOW, LET'S GET THIS STRAIGHT. YOU SAW THE ACCIDENT, AN' THERE WERE PEOPLE IN THIS THING!
THAT'S RIGHT! HELL, THEY WERE SWERVIN' ALL OVER LIKE THEY NEVER DRIVEN NO AUTOMOBILE BEFORE!
I WAS SOME WAY OFF. BUT I SAW 'EM CRASH! THEY WAS GOIN' ABOUT SEVENTY OR EIGHTY, I GUESS, AND, UH
A-AND THEN, THEY GOT OUTTA THE WRECK, AND, UH...
AND WALKED OFF
LAUGHIN'
LOOKS YOU STRAIGHT IN THE EYE AND SPITS!
AFRICA BLOOD AND GUTS
SPRINGVILLE, ARKANSAS 9:35 PM
NO SMOKING
TICKETS
POPCORN
HMM. WELL, NOW, AS IT HAPPENS, WE DO NEED SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER THE TICKET OFFICE
TO BE FRANK, IT AIN'T MUCH OF A JOB AN' WE HAVE TROUBLE KEEPIN' PEOPLE.
HELP WANTED
twitch... death nerve
• NOW PLAYING •
SEE, ALL YA DO IS SIT IN THIS CRAMPED LITTLE BOX AN' SELL TICKETS. A LOTTA PEOPLE CAN'T TAKE THAT.
IT'LL BE FINE...
TICKETS
ADULT $4.00
WHEN DO I START...?
WEEKEND MADU
DAWN OF THE DEAD

WELL, UH... RIGHT NOW, IF THAT'S CONVENIENT.

BUT, UH, LISSEN... WE'RE KINDA SHORTHANDED AN' THIS IS A 24-HOUR JOINT. YOU MIGHT BE IN THERE A WHILE...

ALL WEEK... IF YOU LIKE...

NEXT ATTRACTION

ALL WEEK? NO...NO, I MEAN A LONG STINT WITHOUT A MEAL BREAK OR A BATHROOM BREAK

twitch of the death nerve

SO... DO I,

THIS...SMELLS... SO GOOD...

BEST BUY POPCORN

UMM. WELL, IT'S JUST ORDINARY CHEAP POPCORN. UM, LISSEN, WE HAVEN'T DISCUSSED PAY...

NOT IMPORTANT... WHATEVER... YOU LIKE.

THIS... IS MY BOX NOW?

UM... YEAH. SURE. YOUR BOX.

LISTEN... I LIKE YOUR ATTITUDE. YOU DON'T WHINE ABOUT CONDITIONS OR UNION STUFF. THEY DON'T MAKE WORKERS LIKE YOU ANYMORE.

IN MY OTHER BUSINESSES I COULD USE TEN GUYS LIKE YOU!

OH... I THINK THAT... COULD BE ARRANGED...

THIS... IS MY BOX AND MY OWN... LITTLE WINDOW? THESE... ARE MY TICKETS?

UH, RIGHT. LISSEN, I GOTTA LEAVE... DINNER DATE. LIKE THEY SAY, EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY, FOR TOMORROW...

UH...

UH... F-FORGET IT. I GOTTA GO I'LL SEE YA TOMORROW.

JEEZ...

IS IT THAT LATE ALREADY?

HERO

TICKETS

ADULTS $4.00

NEXT ATTRACTION: WIDOWMAKER

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
SWAMP THING
43
75¢
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U.K. 35p
DEC. 85
WINNER OF TWO 1984 EAGLE AWARDS!
1935
50
1985
By,
ALAN MOORE STAN WOCH & RON RANDALL

THERE'S A MONSTER THAT LIVES OUT IN THE SWAMPS. EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.

THEY EVEN RAN AN ARTICLE IN LOUISIANA LIFE (JAN./FEB. 1984), ABOUT SOME FOOT-PRINTS THAT THEY FOUND IN DUGDEMONA SWAMP, DOWN NEAR HODGE.

PERHAPS YOUR LIBRARY COULD FIND YOU A COPY.

THE FOOTPRINTS WERE 13 INCHES LONG, WITH A 57-INCH STRIDE. SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS PROBABLY A BEAR FROM THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN.

SINCE BEAR TRACKS ARE GENERALLY ABOUT SIX INCHES LONG, OTHERS WEREN'T CONVINCED.

BUT THEN, ISN'T THAT USUALLY THE WAY WITH MONSTER STORIES? THERE'S NEVER ANY REAL EVIDENCE...

...AND IT REMAINS LARGELY A QUESTION OF FAITH.

6-21-84

HMMM...

NOW, WHAT HAVE WE HERE...?

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SWAMP THING
5
CREATED BY
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WINDFALL
ALAN MOORE
WRITER
STAN WOCH
and
RON RANDALL
ARTISTS
KAREN BERGER
EDITOR
TATJANA WOOD
COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA
LETTERER
2

HMMP.

OH, WELL... WHO KNOWS?

LET ME TAKE YOU DOWN, LA DA DADA DAAAAA DEE DEE DEE DUM DEE DEE DEE DUM...

...AND SOMETHING - SOMETH NG - LA LA LA...

STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER.

STOP! IN THE NAME OF LOVE LA DADA DEE DEE DAH OWOH -- WOH -- WOH...

BATON ROUGE

G'NIGHT, MAN! THANKS FOR THE RIDE!

HAPPY TRAILS TOOO YOOOOO DRA DUM DA-DUM..

TRAGEDY! WHEN YOU FEEL IT'S GONE AN' YOU CAIN'T GO ON, IT S...

HUNH?

WHERE IN HELL'D THAT COME FROM?

KLITCH

;HAHH!;

CONTINUED ON 2ND FOLLOWING

OH HI, DAVE.

I... I SPOKE TO MIKE AT THIRD EYE BOOKS. HE SAID YOU'D BE IN LATER, SO...

SURE LEMME TAKE THE CHAIN OFF...

GOOD TO SEE YOU, MAN. BEEN A LONG TIME.

UH...

I, UH, DON'T SUPPOSE SANDY IS ANY BETTER...?

PLAYING IN THE ALLMAN BROTHERS

UH

DAVE?

OH, GOD, SHE'S DYING

AHUH AHUH HUH HUH..

CHESTER, WHAT AM I GONNA DO?

SHE KNOWS SHE'S GOING SOON AT THE HOSPITAL THEY SAID THE CANCER WAS INOPERABLE AN' SO, LIKE, SHE SAID SHE'D RATHER BE AT HOME WHEN IT HAPPENED, BUT...

SHE'S IN PAIN, MAN.

GOD, IT'S HURTIN' HER SO MUCH

UHH... HOW LONG DOES SHE.. I MEAN, UH.

GOD, I DUNNO. IT HAS TO BE SOON. TONIGHT, TOMORROW, THE NIGHT AFTER

SHE'S MY WIFE, CHES, I CAN'T WATCH HER HURTING LIKE THIS.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT *HAVE* SOMETHING... SOME KINDA *DOPE* THAT WOULD MAKE IT *BETTER*.

THE *AUTHOR*, ALDOUS *HUXLEY*. DIDN'T THEY GIVE *HIM* DOPE WHEN HE WAS DYING?

CHES, DO *YOU* HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

HELL, DAVE, I *DUNNO*...

I'VE BEEN DOIN' TEN DAYS *BROWN RICE*, TRYIN' T'CLEAN MY *SYSTEM* OUT, Y'KNOW?

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING *HERE* RIGHT NOW THAT WOULD...

UHHH...

UH, LOOK... THIS PROBABLY WON'T DO ANY GOOD, BUT...

WELL, THIS IS SOMETHIN' I FOUND OUT IN THE *SWAMPS* TODAY.

BEEN *TRYIN'* TO *IDENTIFY* IT, BUT REALLY, I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* THE HELL IT IS...

IT'S A LITTLE LIKE A *YAM*, BUT IT'S REALLY *COMPLEX* AN' *HIGHLY ORGANIZED*.

IT'S GOT *SOME* SIMILARITIES WITH *DATURA ROOT*, SO MAYBE IT'S SOME SORTA UNKNOWN *PSYCHEDELIC*...

I DUNNO. YOU *WANT* IT, IT'S *YOURS*. NO CHARGE.

A-AND THIS IS ALL THAT YOU HAVE?

AEV, I'M SCORY MAYBE I COULD ASK AROUND FOR YA..

NO... NO I THINK IT HAS TO BE TONIGHT

I'LL TAKE A PIECE OF THIS IT CAN'T MAKE HER ANY WORSE, CAN IT?

THANKS, CHEF. SORRY ABOUT CRYIN' AND EVERYTHING IT'S JUST

I KNOW, MAN IT'S OKAY

IT'S OKAY.

YOU GET BACK HOME TO HER NOW AN' TELL HER CHESTER GOD BLESS AN' SENDS HIS LOVE.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

DAVE?

HOLD ON, MAN.

OH, MILO.

CHESTER! HOW YA DOIN'? SEEIN' MUCH O' THAT CHICK LATELY? WHAT WAS HER NAME... NOT MUCH OF A FACE, BUT NICE LEGS...

ME AN' SUZANNE SPLIT UP A COUPLE MONTHS BACK.

MILO, LOOK, I'M EXPECTING FRIENDS...

SURE, SURE... LISSEN, I JUST CAME BY, Y'KNOW, T'SEE IF YOU HAD ANYTHIN' *INTERESTIN'* AROUND THE PLACE.

MY *MAIN* CONNECTION IS AWAY ON *BUSINESS*, AN' I FEEL LIKE GETTIN' *SCREWED UP* TONIGHT, Y'KNOW?

I WAS TALKIN' T' THAT *SPACE CASE* DOWN AT THE *THIRD EYE*, AN' HE SAID YOU'D BE HOME, SO I THOUGHT...

OOPS.

MILO, I DON'T *HAVE* ANYTHING. I'VE BEEN KEEPIN' *CLEAN* LATELY, AND...

UH... IT'S JUST SOME *STUFF* I DUNNO *WHAT* IT IS 'ROUND IT OUT IN THE *SWAMPS*.

LISTEN, I AIN'T HAD TIME TO CHECK THAT STUFF *OUT* YET. YOU DON'T WANT IT...

CLEAN. SURE.

WHAT'S *THIS*?

THIS SOME KINDA *HERBAL HIGH*, MAN?

IT'S *DOPE*. I *WANNIT*.

MILO, LOOK, THAT'S ALL I GOT IN THE *PLACE*, MAN.

I SAID I *WANNIT!* IT LOOKS INTERESTIN! C'MON... HOW MUCH YOU *WANT* FOR IT? FIVE DOLLARS? *TEN* DOLLARS?

MILO, I DON'T WANT TO..

LOOK, OKAY, I'LL GIVE YA *FIFTEEN* BUCKS, OKAY? *FIFTEEN* BUCKS FOR ONE LOUSY SLICE O' THAT @UNK!

AHH... LOOK, ALL RIGHT. *FIFTEEN* DOLLARS. TAKE IT AN' GO.

HEY, MAN, THAT'S *GREAT!* I'LL TAKE *THIS* PIECE, 'CUZ IT'S *BIGGEST*...

LISSEN, I AIN'T GOT THE BREAD *ON* ME RIGHT NOW. I'LL HAVE TO *OWE* YOU IT.

OWE ME IT? HEY, MILO, C'MON...

HEY, WHAT'S THE *PROBLEM?* IT'S A HOSTILE WORLD, MAN. WE GOTTA TRUST OUR *FRIENDS*, DON'T WE?

HAHA! SURE WE DO!

SON OF A BITCH.

CATCH YOU *LATER*, ONES.

IF YOU SEE WHAT'S HER NAME WITH THE *LEGS*, TELL HER I WAS *ASKIN'* FOR HER.

I'M SORRY, SANDY. IT'S THE ONLY THING HE HAD.

H-HOW ARE YOU FEELIN', HONEY?

I FEEL SCARED. I FEEL SICK AN' I FEEL SCARED.

HERE. LEMME HAVE THAT STUFF. THAT WHATEVER-IT-IS...

SANDY...

I..I KEEP WAKIN' UP IN THE MORNINGS AND THINKING, "OH, THANK GOD! IT WAS ALL A DREAM!" AN' THEN I REMEMBER, AND...

SANDY, LISTEN, I LOVE YOU...

HUSH, YOU BE STRONG

I M SCARED BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO DIE, AND I NEED YOU TO BE STRONG.

THIS STUFF. IT DATES KINDA SCENTED. WHAT DID YOU SAY IT WAS...?

IT... IT WAS JUST SOME STUFF CHESTER HAD. JEEZ, I HOPE IT WORKS.

YOU DON'T FEEL ANYTHING YET, DO YOU?

SANDY?

IS ANYTHING HAPPENING?

10

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

ANCHOR INN

NOTHING! NOT ONE GODDAMN THING!

ANCHOR INN

HOW LONG'S THIS STUFF TAKE TO COME ON, ANYWAY?

THAT CHESTER! THAT CRUMMY, USELESS ACID CASUALTY! . WHAT THE HELL'S HE BEEN TRYIN' TO SELL ME?

HE'S INSULTIN' YOUR REPUTATION 'Z A CONNISEWER, MAN, THASS WHAT HE'S DOIN'!

THERE WAS A BOMB, UNDER THE TABLE. I...ALEC HOLLAND...NO. MILO. MILO FLYNN. I... I REACHED FOR IT, BUT I WAS TOO LATE... TOO LATE...

DAMN RIGHT! DAMN RIGHT HE IS!

...BURNED.

I WAS RIPPED OFF, MAN!

I WAS...

ALEC HOLLAND. ALEC HOLLAND. MY NAME IS...NO! I'M MILO FLYNN! MILO FLYNN...I WOKE UP IN THE LAB. THE MEN WERE GONE...

AAAAAAA!

AND I WAS BURNED BEYOND RECOGNITION.

HEY, MILO? STRAIGHTEN OUT, MAN...

CLOSED

AAAAAA! I'M ON FIRE! OH, GOD, I'M ON FIRE, I'M GONNA DIE...

S-SANDY? WHAT'S LIFE? WHAT ARE YOU...?

LIFE. IT'S ALL LIFE.

YOU, ME, FELIX, EVERYTHING. IT'S ALL THE *SAME THING*, LIKE AN *OCEAN*, BUT ALL *DIVIDED UP* AND CONTAINED IN *SEPARATE* BOTTLES...

DAVID, DAVID, YOU'RE *BEAUTIFUL*...

LOOK, YOU'RE NOT *SUPPOSED* TO BE *WALKIN' AROUND!* YOU'RE *SUPPOSED* TO LIE *STILL*.

YOU...YOU STILL TASTE OF THAT *FRUIT*, IT'S *NICE*. IT'S LIKE...

SANDY?

SANDY, WHERE ARE YOU *GOING*? YOU HAVE TO STAY IN *BED*. HEY, SANDY, COME ON...

THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME FOR LYING STILL.

C'MON, DAVID... YOU HAVE TO *HELP ME*...

YOU HAVE TO HELP ME *OUTSIDE*.

OUT! I'VE TOLD YOU JERKS BEFORE! NO FREAKIN' OFF IN MY BAR!

I FELL INTO THE WATER...INTO THE SWAMP...MOLTEN TALLOW AT SIZZLING ON CONTACT WITH THE COLD, LIQUID MUD...

AND WHEN... I EMERGED... FROM THE DEATH... EVERYTHING WAS DIFFERENT...

AARUHHH...

EVERYTHING

EEYAAAAGH! BUGS!

I GOT BUGS CRAWLING AROUND INSIDE ME! I CAN FEEL 'EM!

OH, GOD, LOOK AT MY ARMS! ALL THESE ROOTS STICKIN' THROUGH ME! ALL THIS STUFF

IT'S GROWING ON ME!

IT'S GROWING ALL OVER!

ALL OVER THE GARDEN

I...I DUNNO, EVERYTHING LOOKS SORTA FRESH AND VIVID, BUT...

ALL OVER THE WORLD, IN RUSSIA, IN CHINA, EVERYWHERE.

SANDY, WE'RE GETTIN' WET OUT HERE...

OH, DAVE, CAN YOU SEE IT?

IT'S ALL GETTING WET.

...AND THE WATER CHANGES FROM SOLID TO LIQUID TO GAS, MOVING AROUND THE PLANET.

. AND THERE'S SEPARATE ICICLES THAT MELT AND VANISH, SEPARATE PUDDLES THAT DRY UP AND THEY'RE GONE...

. BUT THEY'RE NOT GONE! THEY JUST CHANGED STATE IS ALL...

Y'KNOW, ICICLES, SNOWFLAKES, THEY'RE ALL UNIQUE. THEY'VE EACH GOT THEIR OWN BEAUTIFUL SHAPE, AND WHEN THEY MELT IT'S GONE FOREVER.

THAT'S WHERE I AM NOW.

I'VE GOT MY OWN SHAPE, AND I LIKE IT, AND I DON'T WANT TO LOSE IT, BUT...

BUT ICICLES ARE FRIGHTENED OF THE SUN

THERE'S NO NEED.

THERE'S NO NEED FOR ALL THIS FEAR.

I'M NOT DEAD! ALEC HOLLAND IS DEAD, BUT I'M NOT HIM! I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO HE IS!

MILO FLYNN. I'M MILO FLYNN...

SURE, BUDDY. SURE Y'ARE...

SAY, DO YOU HAVE A COUPLA BUCKS TO SPARE?

I BEEN GOIN' THROUGH A BAD PATCH AT WORK, MAN...

EEEYAAAAGH!

AAAAA! LEAVE ME ALONE!

HEY! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOIN', MAN...

HOH! LOOKIT HIS EYES! HE'S ON THE STUFF! OUGHTA STICK THE WHOLE BUNCH IN THE ARMY...

OH, GOD.

OH, GOD, THIS IS WHAT THE WORLD'S REALLY LIKE, ISN'T IT? I CAN SEE IT NOW. WE'RE ALL MONSTERS! WE'RE ALL DEFORMED THINGS, LIVING IN HELL...

EVERYTHING JUST DIES AND ROTS, GETS PULLA BUGS, MINDLESS BUGS, EATIN' EACH OTHER...

IT'S HORROR. IT'S ALL HORROR...

HEY, MONEY... NEED A DATE?

HEY, CREEP, I'M TALKIN' TA YOU! LET A LITTLE LOVE AN' AFFECTION INNAYA LIFE, WHYDONCHA?

DROPLETS.

ALL DISTINCT, INDIVIDUAL, WITH THEIR OWN LITTLE HIGHLIGHTS, THEIR OWN LITTLE REFLECTIONS OF THE WORLD..

..AND THEY RUN TOGETHER AND LOSE THEIR INDIVIDUALITY, BECOMING A PUDDLE, A LAKE, AN OCEAN, MERGING WITH ALL THE OTHER DROPLETS...

FLOWING TOGETHER...

WE SPEND OUR LIVES, PRESSING OUR BODIES AGAINST EACH OTHER, TRYING TO BREAK THE SURFACE TENSION OF OUR SKINS, TO UNITE IN A SINGLE GLEAMING BEAD...

MY LOVE, THE SUN IS COMING, AND OUR UNIQUE SHAPES WILL SOON BE GONE.

LET US REHEARSE THAT MOMENT WHEN OUR SPIRITS FINALLY TRICKLE TOGETHER...

IT'S ALMOST AS IF WE KNOW.

LET'S RUN THROUGH IT JUST ONE LAST TIME.

PLAYTIME.

SCREAMS, WHIMPERING, SPLASHING IN STICKY PUDDLES, STUMBLING THROUGH THE DRIVING ARTERIAL RAIN.

RUNNING THROUGH MONSTER CITY.

IN JERSEY, I SOLD JUNK OUT WITH RAT POISON. IN ARKANSAS, I PUSHED JULIETTE DOWNSTAIRS SO SHE MISCARRIED.

AWAY DOWN THE ALLEY, SOME KIDS ARE BURNING A DOG.

A CITY, A CONTINENT, A WHOLE PLANET FULL OF TORTURE, MADNESS, DEATH...

HEADS SWING LIKE BEADS ON THE PHONE WIRES, BLOATED CROWS MUNCHING BETWEEN THE MURDERED WOMEN LITTERING THE SIDEWALK...

THERE'S NO WAY OUT.

THERE'S NO WAY OUT, BUT I KEEP RUNNING

HEY! MISTER, WATCH OUT! DON TCHA SEE THE LIGHT?

SANDY. .

THERE'S...I CAN SEE... CAN FEEL A SORT OF LIGHT...

SANDY, WHAT IS IT...?

IT'S THE SUN.

BUT...IT'S STILL NIGHTTIME, AND IT'S RAINING. IT CAN'T BE THE...

NOT THAT SUN.

KISS ME.

NOT DEAD! I'M NOT, I'M NOT, I'M NOT!

HEY! POND-LIFE! OUTTA THE WAY!

BEEP BEEP!

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? DON'T ANY OF YOU UNDERSTAND?

I'M IN HELL, BUT I'M NOT DEAD!

THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE! THERE'S BEEN A TERRIBLE...

...MISTAKE

EEEE

DEAD?

HELL, DAVE, I'M SORRY, MAN...

NO...

NO, DON'T BE SORRY.

IT WASN'T A BAD THING, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN? IT WASN'T A BAD EXPERIENCE...

THAT STUFF YOU GAVE ME FOR HER. IT MADE EVERYTHING SO BEAUTIFUL

I ONLY GOT A TASTE OF IT, WHEN I KISSED HER, BUT EVEN I COULD FEEL WHAT WAS HAPPENING INSIDE HER

REALLY?

REALLY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, BUT SOMEBODY OUGHT TO MARKET IT, QUICKLY.

THANKS FOR GIVING IT TO HER, CHESTER. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN.

WELL, Y'KNOW, GLAD I COULD HELP. I DIDN'T REALLY DO ANYTHING...

YOU GAVE MY WIFE'S LAST MOMENTS SOME MEANING, CHESTER. YOU OUGHT TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT THAT.

YEAH.

YEAH, I GUESS I DO.

YOU DUMB HIPPIE BASTARD! I HOPE YOU FEEL BAD ABOUT WHAT YOU DID, MAN!

YOU GAVE MILO THAT STUFF, YOU AS GOOD AS KILLED HIM!

HEY, HE CAME IN HERE AND DEMANDED THAT STUFF, MAN! AN' THE OTHER PERSON WHO TRIED IT HAD A REAL GOOD TIME...

HE WAS SCREAMIN' ABOUT BURNIN' UP, MAN! THAT DON'T SOUND LIKE NO GOOD TIME T' ME!

I...I DUNNO..

MAYBE THAT STUFF JUST BRINGS OUT WHAT'S IN A PERSON ALREADY...

WELL, MILO SURE MUSTA HAD SOME WEIRD JUNK IN HIS HEAD, ALL RIGHT. I AIN'T NEVER SEEN ANYBODY THAT MESSED UP BEFORE!

I JUST... I JUST FLASHED ON SOMETHING. THIS STUFF... THIS FRUIT... IT'S LIKE SOME KINDA COSMIC ULTIMUS FIBER, RIGHT?

YOU EAT IT, AN' IT TELLS YOU WHETHER YOU'RE A BAD PERSON OR A GOOD PERSON.

DO YA HAVE ANY MORE?

YEAH, YEAH... LATER FOR ALL THAT INTERGALACTIC CRAP.

AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IT'S JUST SOME WEIRD JUNK THAT MAKES PEOPLE UNBELIEVABLY SCREWED UP..

...WHICH, LIKE, BRINGS ME TO WHAT I WANNED T' ASK YA...

I THREW HIM OUT.

TEN MINUTES LATER I NOTICED MY YIN-YANG PAPERWEIGHT HAD DEMATERIALIZED.

WORTHLESS LOUSY JUNKIE. I HOPE HE DIES

IT'S LATE NOW, AND I GOT SOME COUNTRY JOE PLAYING HERE...

"IF I TAKE ONE MORE TRIP NOW, DON'T THINK I'LL EVER COME DOWN..."

I DUNNO, MAN.

I REALLY DON'T KNOW.

I THINK I'M A GOOD PERSON. I MEAN, THAT'S WHAT I TRY TO BE...

I DON'T ABUSE THE PLANET, OR OTHER PEOPLE, AND I'M NEVER VIOLENT OR ANYTHING...

THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION: HEAVEN AND HELL

BUT, LIKE, I STILL EAT MEAT, AND I SOMETIMES THINK SOME PRETTY BAD THINGS...

I SAID SOME STUFF TO SUZANNE BEFORE SHE LEFT, AND I WISH I HADN'T SAID IT.

I WAS SO BITTER.

BUT, HELL, THERE'S WORSE PEOPLE THAN ME. AT LEAST I NEVER HIT A WOMAN. SOME GUYS DO THAT ALL THE TIME!

I GUESS IN THE END, YOU'RE AS GOOD A PERSON AS YOU THINK YOU ARE...

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING

IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF FAITH, THAT'S ALL.

NAHH.

NEXT: BOGEYMEN!

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
44
75¢
CAN 95¢
U K 35p
JAN 86
SWAMP THING
WINNER OF TWO 1984 EAGLE AWARDS!
1935
50
1985
BY ALAN MOORE, STEPHEN BISSETTE AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

TEST ME.

G'WAN... THINK OF A NUMBER!

WHUH?

I SAID TEST ME, THINK OF A NUMBER BETWEEN ONE AND ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOUR.

UHH... FIFTY-EIGHT.

"FIFTY-EIGHT. LET'S SEE...

"HER EYES WERE GRAY-GREEN, LIKE AN AGGIE I ONCE HAD, ONLY WITH LITTLE FLECKS OF OCHRE AROUND THE CENTER. ASK ME ANOTHER."

UHH... WAIT A MINUTE... I DON'T GET THIS. IS THIS, LIKE, SOME SORT OF PARTY PIECE OR WHAT?

C'MON... JUST ASK ME A NUMBER.

OHH... WHAT THE HELL. ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-TWO.

"AHHH! ONE THIRTY TWO!

"HE HAD BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL BLUE EYES. I MEAN, JUST PERFECT, LIKE THE SKY, LIKE THE SORT OF BLUE YOU ONLY GET IN PAINTINGS...

"I MEAN, HOW CAN THEY CALL ME CALLOUS?"

BAR

HOW CAN THEY CALL ME CALLOUS WHEN I REMEMBER EVERY SINGLE PAIR OF EYES?

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WEIN!

ALAN MOORE: WRITER * BISSETTE, RANDALL & TOTLEBEN: ARTISTS

SWAMP THING

CREATED BY LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON

BOGEYMEN

KAREN BERGER: EDITOR * TATJANA WOOD COLORIST * JOHN COSTANZA: LETTERER

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

"HELLO"?

ALEC, YOU'VE JUST POURED YOURSELF OUT OF MY SINK.

I THINK I'M GOING TO NEED SOMETHING MORE THAN "HELLO".

OH... THAT...

I THOUGHT THAT... YOU MUST BE TIRED.. OF VISITING ME . OUT IN THE SWAMPS... ALL THE TIME ..

BY SHIFTING MY CONSCIOUSNESS... TO THE ASTRAL.. IN THE PIPE SYSTEM.. I WAS ABLE... TO VISIT YOU.

THAT'S, UH, THAT'S VERY THOUGHTFUL OF YOU. I'M JUST GLAD MY HAIR'S THIS COLOR ALREADY.

HEY, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE BEEN BACK TO MY PLACE...

I FEEL I SHOULD OFFER YOU COFFEE.

PLEASE .. HAVE ONE YOURSELF! SHOULD I COME THROUGH .. INTO THE LIVING ROOM...?

UH,..SURE! JUST LET ME GET SOME NEWSPAPER, BECAUSE THE CARPET'S SORTA NEW. I WON'T BE A MOMENT..

THERE... JUST TRY TO KEEP ON THE PAPER, OKAY?

DID YOU COME BY FOR ANY PARTICULAR REASON? WAS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT?...

YES... CONSTANTINE... STILL HAS NOT CONTACTED ME...

SO YOU'RE FINALLY SICK OF THE SUPERCILIOUS ENGLISH CREEP! YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH BEING SHUNTED AROUND AND MANIPULATED ANYMORE! THAT'S GREAT!

UH...

...ISN'T IT?

I...AM NOT SURE...
HE LEADS ME AROUND THE COUNTRY.. TANTALIZING ME WITH MYSTERIES... AND THEN VANISHES ..WITH SO MUCH... LEFT UNEXPLAINED...
I CANNOT BELIEVE... THAT THE TRAIL... JUST PETERS OUT...
SO MUCH... SEEMS STRANGE ABOUT THE WORLD. .THE SKIES...THE WEATHER... EVEN THE CONSTELLATIONS SEEM DIFFERENT...
WITHOUT CONSTANTINE... I AM NOT SURE...HOW I STAND...
HEY, UH, I'M SORRY, COULD YOU KEEP ON THE PAPER? THANKS...
OH! AND THE WINDOW! YOU BETTER NOT GO TOO NEAR THE WINDOW IN CASE SOMEBODY SEES...
I MEAN, IT'S NOT THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU BRINGING DOWN THE PROPERTY VALUES OR ANYTHING...
NO. I UNDERSTAND...
I'M... INCONVENIENCING YOU. .I'D. BETTER GO..
HEY, LOOK, I'M SORRY, ALEC. I JUST WASN'T PREPARED. LISTEN, PERHAPS NEXT TIME, IF YOU LET ME KNOW YOU'RE COMING...
YES. PERHAPS...
AND LISTEN, DON'T WORRY ABOUT CONSTANTINE. HE'S NOT WORTH IT. YOU SHOULD BE GLAD YOU'RE RID OF HIM! HE JUST...
ALEC?
PHLEB!
HMMP
OH, WELL...
IF YOU'RE GOING TO SULK...
SQUP PLERP!
SHLIK
THWEP
SQULK
PWUP
THWUUUP
WEP
WEP!

DAYTON?

COME ON, MATE, SNAP OUT OF IT. THERE'S NO POINT SULKING.

ALL RIGHT, SO THERE'S AN APOCALYPSE GOING ON OUTSIDE.

WHAT?

BLUE FLAME

I MEAN, IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD..

CONSTANTINE, THIS IS ALL A JOKE TO YOU, ISN'T IT? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

OH, GOD, I WANT A DRINK...

NO YOU DON'T, YOU WANT SOME NICE FRESH AIR, C'MON...GET YOUR COAT ON...

AND LISTEN... DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS CRISIS BUSINESS IT'S WHAT COMES AFTER THAT YOU SHOULD BE WORRYING ABOUT.

JOHN, WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO DAMN CRYPTIC? I MEAN, EARLIER YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A BOG THING...

SWAMP THING, ACTUALLY. YES... HE'S QUITE CRUCIAL, BUT I THINK I'LL LET HIM STEW FOR A BIT LONGER.

HE'S SO CAUGHT UP IN THE WHOLE SITUATION BY NOW, THEY'RE BOUND TO HAVE NOTICED HIM.

THERE'S NO NEED TO SEND HIM LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. TROUBLE WILL BE LOOKING FOR HIM.

OH, GOD. JOHN, LOOK...

LOOK AT THE SKY.

CONTINUED ON THE BACK TO LOOKING

HMM.

IT'S A BIT LIKE 2001, ISN'T IT?

EXCUSE ME... IT'S DANGEROUS OUT HERE. MOST PEOPLE ARE KEEPING INDOORS...

WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT'S CAUSING THE DISTURBANCE, BUT IT'S IN THE BEST POSSIBLE HANDS. IN THE MEANTIME.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SQUIRE. THIS GENTLEMAN'S ONE OF YOU YOU'VE HEARD OF MENTO?

JOHN, C'MON. HE WOULDN'T REMEMBER...

MENTO. NO, I...

OH, WAIT... MENTO WHO WAS ATTACHED TO THE DOOM PATROL?

YES, YES, THAT'S RIGHT. MARRIED TO ONE OF THEM ACTUALLY. YOU WERE AT OUR WEDDINGS...

UUH... OH. YES! OF COURSE!

WELL, UH, LISTEN, I'M SURE YOU AND YOUR FRIEND WILL BE AS SAFE AS ANYBODY. I HAVE TO GO. THERE'S A LOT TO DO.

YES, YES, OF COURSE. GOOD LUCK.

THERE, YOU SEE?

THAT'S THE THING ABOUT NIGHT'S LIKE THIS.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU'RE GOING TO RUN INTO...

Y'KNOW...

Y'KNOW, FELLA, IT'S LUCKY YOU AN' ME MET UP! NEVER WOULDA MADE IT HOME WITHOUT YA...

S'FUNNY.. DON'T USUALLY GET AS PLASTERED AZZISS. MUSTA BIN DRINKIN' ON AN EMPTY STUMMICK. GETS YA EVERY TIME...

HEY, LISSEN... LISSEN, WHEN WE FIND MY STREET, THE HOUSE NUMMER IS NINE'Y-SEVEN...

"NINETY-SEVEN. BAG LADY. ONE EYE WAS BROWN, THE OTHER HAD A CAST OR A CATARACT. MAYBE BOTH.

"IT LOOKED LIKE SOMEBODY HAD SHOT HER IN THE HEAD WITH A MUSKET BALL OF FROSTED GLASS."

HUH? NO... NO, I MEAN MY HOUSE. MY HOUSE IS NINE 'Y-SEVEN...

HEY, ARE WE GOING THE *RIGHT* WAY? I DON'T RECOGNIZE...

DON'T WORRY. IT'S A *SHORT CUT* WE'LL HAVE YOU HOME BY *TWELVE*...

TELL ME... WHEN YOU WERE A KID, WERE YOU AFRAID OF THE *BOGEYMAN*?

UH... WELL, YEAH, I GUESS. I GUESS *EVERYBODY* WAS. BUT...?

I *KNEW* THE BOGEYMAN. *THE* BOGEYMAN. KNEW HIM *PERSONALLY*.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

"HE PRETENDED TO BE OUR SCHOOL JANITOR, BACK WHEN I WAS IN THIRD GRADE. BUT I KNEW, SEE? I KNEW HE WAS THE BOGEYMAN.

"HIS EYES WERE LIKE NAILS IN YELLOWED IVORY. THEY GAVE HIM AWAY."

IF YOU RAN IN THE HALLWAY, HE'D GRAB THE SHORT HAIR AT YOUR TEMPLES AND PULL IT.

FUNNY SORT OF PAIN. MADE YOU FEEL SICK.

OOUH. DON'T TALK ABOUT SICK...

"HE BROUGHT COFFEE TO SCHOOL, IN A FLASK. I STOLE A GLASS TEST TUBE FROM THE SCIENCE ROOM AND GROUND IT UP WITH A MORTAR AND PESTLE. IT WAS EASY.

"HE WAS NUMBER ONE."

NOBODY SUSPECTED ME. THE BOGEYMAN WAS GONE. HE COULDN'T SCARE ME ANYMORE.

PRETTY SOON, I REALIZED HE'D LEFT A VACANCY, AS BOGEYMAN. IF I DIDN'T FILL IT, SOMEBODY ELSE WOULD!

HEY, WHERE ARE WE? IT'S... ;UUK;

"JEANNIE TUCKER WAS MY FIRST PROPER ASSIGNMENT AS BOGEYMAN. A BIG, SLOW GIRL AROUND FIFTEEN, NONE TOO BRIGHT.

"WE WENT UP TO THE GRAVEL PITS TOGETHER. HER EYES LOOKED LIKE BUTTERSCOTCH. SHE WAS NUMBER TWO."

HEY, LEAVE OFF WITH ALL THE NUMBERS, HUH? I AIN'T FEELIN' SO GOOD...

I MEAN, NUMBERS, NUMBERS, WHAT IS IT WITH YOU?

NUMBERS ARE IMPORTANT, FRIEND.

EVERYBODY HAS A NUMBER...

... AND YOURS JUST CAME UP.
HUNH...?
HEY! WAIT!
WHAT THE HELL'S ALL...
CUUGUHHH
"ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE."

"I GO THROUGH HIS WALLET. NOBODY PAYS ME ANY WAGES FOR DOING THIS JOB, SO I COLLECT A SORT OF BOGEYMAN TAX.

"I COUNT THE BILLS. THIRTY-THREE BUCKS.

"THIRTY-THREE...

"HMMM.

"FURTHER DOWN THE TRACK I TURN AND LOOK BACK AT HIM, LYING THERE, STILL AND QUIET IN THE LEAFMOLD. HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S MOONBATHING.

"NO NEED TO COVER HIM. SWAMPS ARE BOGEYMAN TERRITORY. THEY'LL PROTECT ME.

"PROBABLY NOBODY WILL FIND THE BODY FOR WEEKS..."

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

"BOGEYMAN NIGHT, BOGEYMAN MOON... I'M GLAD I CAME HERE.

"IT WAS JUST AN IMPULSE, AS IF SOMETHING HERE TELLING ME THAT LOUISIANA WAS WHERE IT WAS HAPPENING, THAT LOUISIANA NEEDED A BOGEYMAN...

"BOGEYMAN. JUST THE WORD HAS A KIND OF AURA AROUND IT.

"I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE AVOID IT, WHY THEY INVENT OTHER NAMES, LIKE 'SERIAL KILLER' OR WHATEVER...

"I MEAN, WHAT'S WRONG WITH BOGEYMAN?

"WAIT A MINUTE... WHERE AM I? ALL THESE TREES LOOK THE SAME. IF THEY HAD EYES I COULD TELL THEM APART, BUT...

"LET'S SEE. IF I BEAR LEFT I THINK I SHOULD REACH HIGHWAY 71...

"AND THEN, WHEN I REACH ALEXANDRIA, I CAN HEAD UP ACROSS THE STATE LINE TO ARKANSAS. IT'LL BE SAFE THERE. THE STATE POLICE DEPARTMENTS NEVER CONNECT.

"SO, FROM ALEXANDRIA I HAVE TO TAKE HIGHWAY 165...

"HMMM. ONE SIXTY-FIVE...

"THAT'S A COINCIDENCE. I WONDER WHAT IT MEANS?

"ALL COINCIDENCES MEAN SOMETHING. ASK ANYBODY IN MY LINE OF WORK.

"WELL, NOT EXACTLY MY LINE OF WORK. I MEAN, THERE'S ONLY ONE BOGEYMAN, RIGHT?

"I JUST MEAN PEOPLE WHO LIKE THE STUFF I LIKE.

"I KNOW GUYS LIKE THAT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THEY MOVE FROM STATE TO STATE, MEETING UP OCCASIONALLY, TRADING STORIES...

"IN PORTLAND I HEARD ABOUT A GUY WHO'D DONE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY!

"AWESOME.

"THE TRAGEDY IS, IT'S THE LOSERS WHO MAKE THE HEADLINES. CHARLIE MANSON, RICHARD SPECK, SON O' SAM...

"I MEAN, ADD THEIR SCORES TOGETHER, YOU STILL AIN'T IN TREBLE FIGURES!

"AM I GOING THE RIGHT WAY?

"THIS MUST BRING ME OUT ON THE HIGHWAY, BUT THE UNDERGROWTH SEEMS SO DENSE. MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE...

"AOW!

"GODDAMN JUNK GROWIN' ALL OVER THE PLACE! WHO NEEDS IT?

"I HAVE TO STOP, GET MY BEARINGS. ALSO MY BREATH... THIS GROUND, IT'S THE PITS. EVEN WALKING, IT WEARS YOU OUT...

"I LEAN AGAINST A TREE WHILE I SCRAPE THE MUD OFF MY BOOTS...

"AND

THE TREE

"TAKES

"MY

"HAND"!

YAAAAAAA

"WHAT WAS IT? A BEAR? WAS IT A BEAR? RUN. GET AWAY, OUT OF RANGE...

"I LOOK BACK, AND THERE IT IS, AGAINST THE MOONLIGHT. NOT A BEAR. A MAN. A BIG MAN.

"IT WAS A BEAR. I'M SURE.

"MAYBE A CAJUN? GOODAMN COONASS. IF HE THINKS HE...

"WAIT A MINUTE. IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S...

"...MELTING?

"I CAN'T HEAR IT FOLLOWING ME.

"TRICK OF THE LIGHT. SURE. SOME KINDA JUNK CAJUNS KNOW HOW TO DO. WELL, HE'S MADE A MISTAKE. MAN, IF HE KNEW. IF HE KNEW WHO HE WAS FOOLING WITH...

"HERE COMES ONE SIXTY-SIX.

"HE MUST BE BEHIND ME SOMEPLACE. OKAY. OKAY, I'LL WAIT UP HERE. I NEVER HAD A CAJUN BEFORE. I WONDER WHAT COLOR THEIR EYES ARE? ARE THEY BROWN, OR BLUE, OR..."

CONTINUED ON 2-29 PAGE FOLLOWING.

SHOKK CHOK SHOK

AAAAGH!

NNGUH!

GGUH!

"GOT HIM! I GOT HIM! I MUST HAVE...

"WHERE? WHERE IS HE? HE'S GONE. BUT I GOT HIM! I...

"WAIT. WHAT'S...

"HIS HAND. JEEZ. I CUT OFF HIS HAND.

"HOW DID I DO THAT? I JUST SLASHED AT HIM. I...

"I JUST..."

EEUUUH! GET OFF! GET OFF A ME!

"AHH, NO, GOT MY ARMS, IT'S WET, CUT IT OFF, I'M HURTING MYSELF, WHAT IS IT, RUN, JUST RUN, THERE'S A WAY OUT...

"THERE HAS TO BE...

"...A WAY...

"...OUT.

"TURN. RUN. ANOTHER PATH. ANOTHER TRAIL. ANOTHER...

"NO. THIS IS ALL WRONG. THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN TO ME. THAT'S UNDERSTOOD. IT GOES WITH MY JOB. UNLESS...

"NO.

SHKLUPP!

"NO, THEY WOULDN'T. THEY WOULDN'T APPOINT ANY-ONE ELSE! NOT WITHOUT TELLING ME...

"I'M PERFECT FOR THIS JOB. I'VE ALWAYS DONE EVERYTHING BY THE BOOK. I NEVER PUT A FOOT WRONG. I..."

SLOCH

AW, NO. AW, HEY, NOT THIS WAY. NOT MUD...

I MEAN, LISTEN, I CAN TAKE IT, BUT...

SULLOP

GLULGH

FLUP FLUP

AW HELL...

HEY... HEY, LISTEN! DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM? I KILLED ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE PEOPLE!

LISTEN... YOU TELL 'EM, RIGHT? YOU TELL 'EM WHO I WAS AND WHAT I DID!

I'M NOT ASHAMED.

MY NAME... ⁘

"I'M GOING UNDER. I'M GOING, I'M GOING, I'M..."

WH-WHERE AM I?

YOU'RE HERE. WITH US.

BUT... WHO ARE YOU?

THAT DEPENDS. WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK TO FIRST? YOU CAN DECIDE.

WAIT A MINUTE... I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHERE...

COME ON. IT'S SIMPLE...

JUST THINK OF A NUMBER.

"IN THE DARKNESS, SOMEBODY TAKES HOLD OF THE SHORT HAIR AT MY TEMPLE AND BEGINS TO TUG. I TRY TO SCREAM, BUT MY LUNGS ARE FILLED WITH MUD..."

ANOTHER MONSTER DEAD..

HOW MANY MORE?

HOW MANY MORE... BEFORE THIS COUNTRY... HAS BEEN SQUEEZED DRY... OF NIGHTMARES?

CONSTANT ME... LED ME THROUGH THE BADLANDS... PROMISING ME KNOWLEDGE... BUT DELIVERING... ONLY HORROR... AFTER HORROR..

THINGS... THAT CANNOT BE BURIED... OR FORGOTTEN... OR WALKED AWAY FROM...

IS THERE SOME PATTERN... THAT I SHOULD PERCEIVE... IN THIS SENSELESS PAGEANT... OF ATROCITY...?

IS THERE SOME TRUTH... THAT MAY BE DIVINED... FROM THE ENTRAILS... OF AMERICA...?

IT SEEMS USELESS...

I STRUGGLE... TO IMPOSE A STRUCTURE... THAT HAS MEANING... ON THE MADNESS THAT CHURNS... WITHIN THIS CONTINENT... WITHIN THIS WORLD...

BUT TONIGHT... I LOOKED INTO A MAN'S EYES... AND GLIMPSED THE ABYSS...

AND I FEAR... THAT IT MAY... BE BOTTOMLESS...

I KNOW... THAT THERE MUST BE AN ANSWER... A LIGHT IN THE BLACKNESS... BUT I DON'T KNOW... IF I CAN FIND IT... ON MY OWN.

CONSTANTINE...

CONSTANTINE... WHERE ARE YOU...?

WHY... DID YOU LEAVE ME... IN THE DARK..?

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

GRUNCH

RUSP

CLIVE BARKER

GRUNCH

BRAINING

AAAAAA!

WHOOO.

HELLO? ABBY CABLE.

HELLO, MRS. CABLE. KEEPIN' WELL?

LISTEN, TELL YOUR BOYFRIEND TO BE IN SAN MIGUEL, CALIFORNIA, A WEEK FROM TODAY. TELL HIM IT'S HIS *LAST STOP* BEFORE THE FINALE.

THAT'S ALL. YOU CAN GET BACK TO YOUR BOOK NOW.

GLIK

BRRRRRRRR

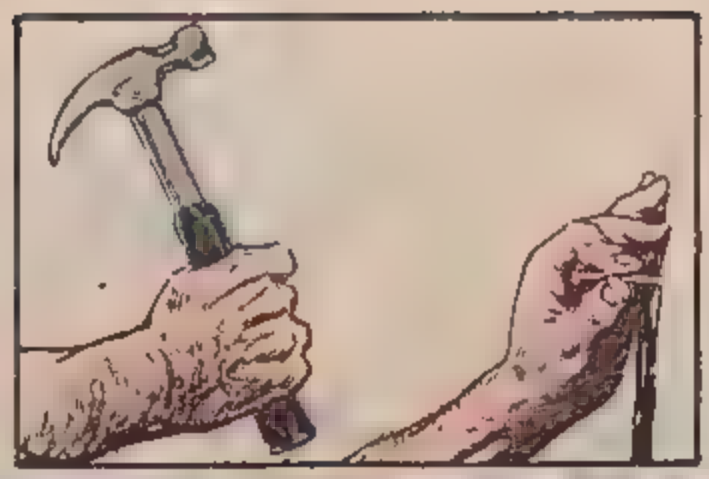
NEXT: GHOST DANCE!

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
SWAMP THING
BY
ALAN MOORE,
STAN WOCH &
ALFREDO ALCALA
45
75¢
CAN 95¢
U K 35p
FEB 86
1935
DC
1985
WINNER OF FIVE JACK KIRBY AWARDS!

BANG.

BANG.

BANG.



THE THIRTEEN FIREPLACES IN THE SEANCE ROOM WERE VICTORIAN FIREPLACES. THE SILENCE IN THE SEANCE ROOM WAS VICTORIAN SILENCE, COLD AND RESERVED.

BANG. BANG. BANG

CIRCLING THE MASSIVE OAK TABLE, ED CLUTTY AND THE DUTCHMAN WERE ATTEMPTING TO SETTLE IT ONCE AND FOR ALL.

ED, WHO STILL MAINTAINED THAT THE DECK HAD BEEN MARKED THAT NIGHT IN 1851, SHOT OFF THE DUTCHMAN'S EAR.

CONSIDERING ED TO BE MERELY A POOR LOSER, THE DUTCHMAN BLEW THREE FINGERS OFF CLUTTY'S LEFT HAND.

ED RETALIATED BY BLASTING THE TOP OF HIS OPPONENT'S HEAD OFF, JUST ABOVE THE BRIDGE OF HIS NOSE

ANSERED, THE DUTCHMAN PUT ONE BULLET THROUGH CLUTTY'S HEART, ANOTHER THROUGH HIS THROAT.

STAUNCHING THE BLOOD FROM HIS NECK WITH A FINGERLESS HAND, ED SCREAMED AND RETURNED FIRE.

THE SÉANCE ROOM WAS SILENT.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

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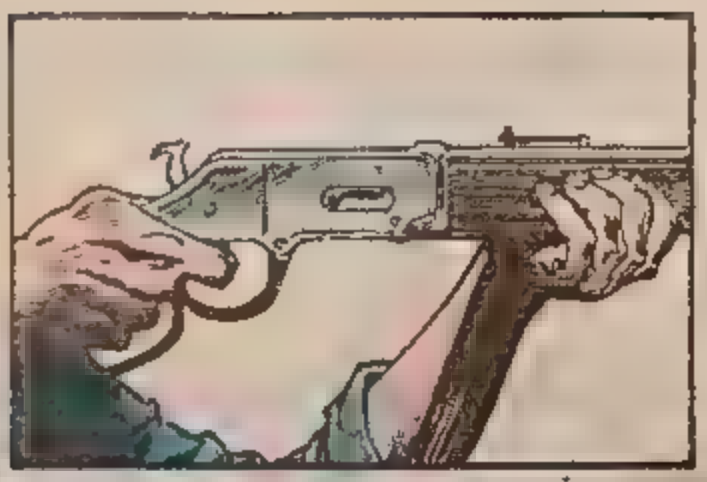
"THE SOUND OF THE HAMMERS MUST NEVER STOP."



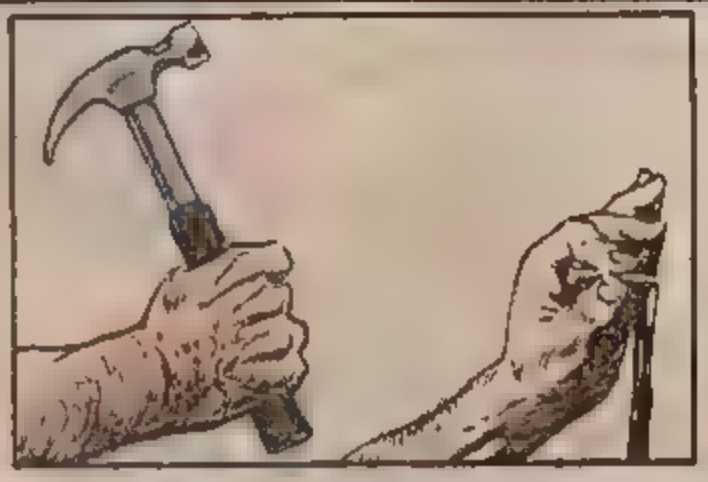
THAT'S WHAT THE GHOSTS TOLD AMY CAMBRIDGE WHEN SHE ASKED HOW SHE COULD UNDO THE WRONG HER FAMILY'S GUNS HAD CAUSED THEM...

"THE SOUND OF THE HAMMERS MUST NEVER STOP."

SO SHE BUILT A HOUSE COVERING SIX ACRES JUST TO KEEP THE SPOOKS AWAY? THAT'S NOT SUPERNATURAL, MAN. THAT'S JUST PLAIN NUTS.

ANYWAY, WHY'D SHE FEEL SO GUILTY? THE CAMBRIDGE REPEATER WASN'T EVEN A POPULAR GUN!

"HA! WELL, ANYWAYS, I BET IT WASN'T TOO POPULAR WITH THE INDIANS!



"BANG! BANG! BANG! YEEEEE-HAW!"

LOOK, REALLY, IT'S NOT A JOKE. THE CAMBRIDGE REPEATER WAS A SORT OF SECOND-RATE COPY OF THE WINCHESTER.

IT WAS CHEAPER, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE USED 'EM. USED 'EM FOR KILLING.

DAVID, THEY'RE RIFLES! WHAT ELSE WOULD PEOPLE USE THEM FOR? BEATING EGGS?

JUST BECAUSE PEOPLE GET SHOT, THAT DOESN'T PROVE ALL THIS GHOST STUFF.

NRA

RIGHT! YOU OUGHTA LISTEN TO YOUR WIFE, DAVE, AND FORGET ALL THIS SPIRITUALISM CRAP!

I MEAN, WHO NEEDS IT WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH FUN TO BE HAD ON A PURELY PHYSICAL PLANE, RIGHT, LINDA?

ROD, IT IS AN OLD PLACE, ALL FALLING DOWN. IT MIGHT BE UNSAFE...

HAHAHA. SURE

HEY, WHO RATTLED YOUR CAGE? I MEAN, WHAT IS THIS? I HAVE A NOVEL IDEA FOR A LITTLE FUN, EVERYBODY STARTS GETTIN' COLD FEET!

ROD'S RIGHT, JUDY. THIS BEATS TAKIN' IN ANOTHER CRUMMY MOVIE..

NO TRESPASSING BY ORDER SAN MIGUEL P.D.

LOOK, I WASN'T TRYING TO PUT A DAMPER ON ANYTHING. I MEAN, KNOCK WOOD, THE PLACE IS PROBABLY PERFECTLY OKAY..

MAN! "KNOCK WOOD" DAVID, WHERE DID YOU GET ALL THIS SUPERSTITION FROM?

UH WELL, "KNOCK WOOD" PROBABLY DATES BACK TO WHEN FOLK ASKED WOOD ELEMENTALS TO WATCH OVER THEM...

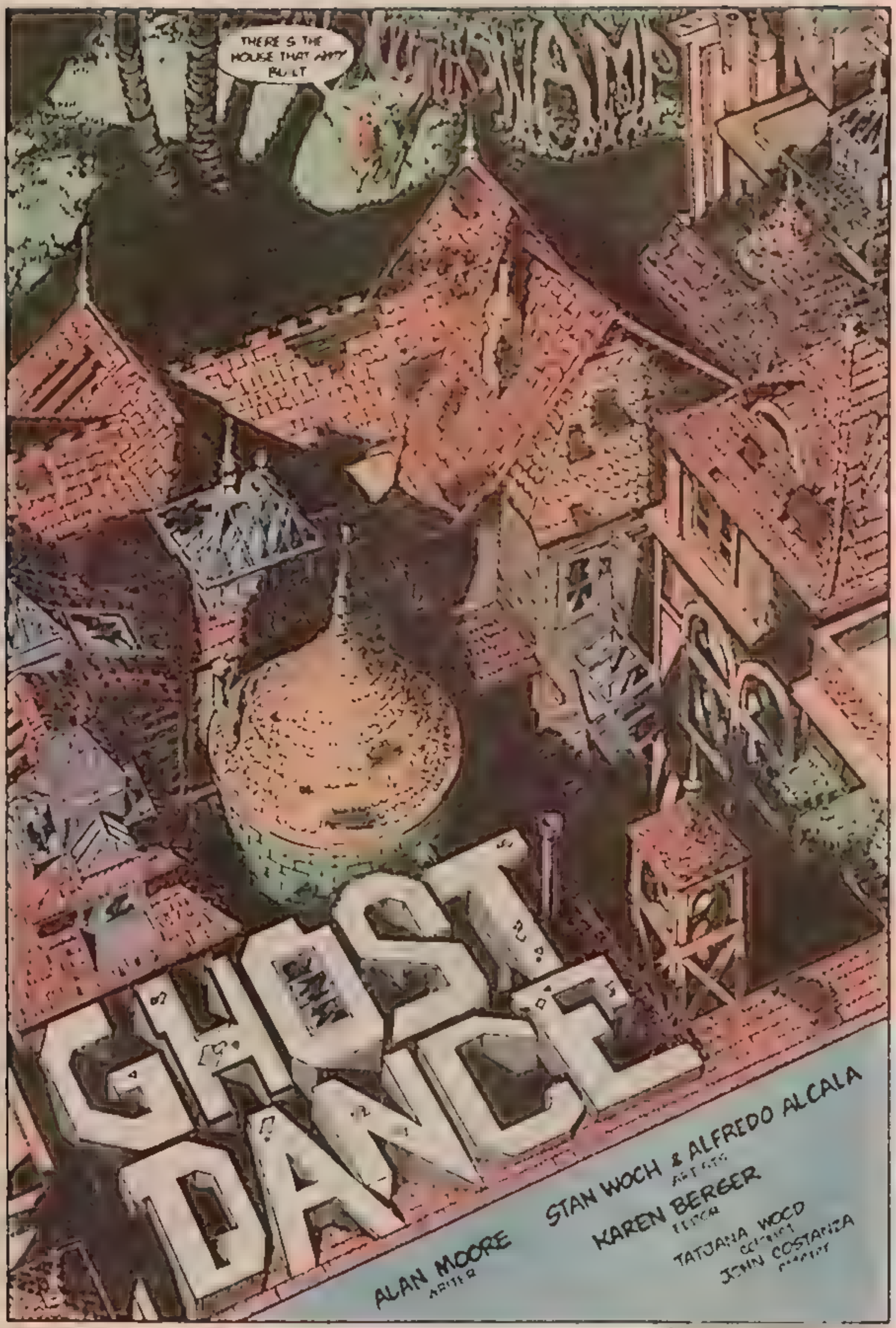
HEY, I'M SUPERSTITIOUS, TOO! I ABSOLUTELY REFUSE TO MAKE LOVE THIRTEEN TIMES IN ONE NIGHT! RIGHT, JUDE?

ROD, STOP IT

SEE, I ALWAYS INSIST WE STOP WITH NUMBER TWELVE, NO MATTER HOW MUCH JUDY BEGS ME TO CARRY ON

ROD, PLEASE...

HEY! WE'RE HERE! THERE IT IS!


THERE'S THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT
GHOST DANCE
ALAN MOORE
STAN WOCH & ALFREDO ALCALA
KAREN BERGER
TATJANA WOOD
JOHN COSTANZA

JEEZ... THAT'S ALL ONE HOUSE? ALL THOSE TOWERS AND WINDOWS?

SHE CARRIED ON EXTENDING THAT HOUSE FOR NEARLY FORTY YEARS, ACCORDING TO THE GHOSTS' INSTRUCTIONS. THE BUILDERS WORKED IN SHIFTS, DAY AND NIGHT.

BUT... WHY?

"BECAUSE THE SOUND OF THE HAMMERS MUST NEVER STOP.

"THAT'S HOW THE GHOSTS WANTED IT."

GHOSTS, HELL! WHAT ABOUT REAL ESTATE? HOW COME THIS PLACE HAS BEEN LEFT TO ROT?

WELL, THE CAMBRIDGE FAMILY WAS GOING TO TURN IT INTO A GUN MUSEUM, BUT THEY CHANGED THEIR MINDS Y'SEE, INSIDE THE HOUSE, IT'S ..

... HAUNTED? ALL THOSE DEAD OUTLAWS AND REDSKINS? DAVID, ISN'T THAT JUST A LITTLE STEPHEN KING?

I WASN'T GOING TO SAY "HAUNTED." INSIDE THE HOUSE, IT'S... ANNOYING. THE ARCHITECTURE SHE BUILT IT TO THE GHOSTS' SPECIFICATIONS...

THERE'S ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY ROOMS, THERE'S THIRTEEN BATHROOMS...

HEY, HOW MANY BEDROOMS DID THE GHOSTS ASK FOR? I MEAN, Y'KNOW, IS THERE SEX AFTER DEATH?

HAHAHA!

WELL, I'M GONNA TAKE A LOOK FOR MYSELF! WHO'S COMING?

LINDA, I DUNNO.. IT'S LIKE A MAZE. THE SERVANTS NEEDED MAPS...

DAVE, LIGHTEN UP, OKAY?

HEY! LINDA! YOU BE SHELLY DUVALL, I'LL BE JACK NICHOLSON!

RRRAGGHH! GNAARRGH!

HEEEEERE'S RODDEEEE!

HAHAHAHAHA!

I'M... SORRY ABOUT ROD. ABOUT THE WAY HE BEHAVES I MEAN, WITH LINDA...

IT'S OKAY. LINDA PLAYS UP TO IT. IT'S JUST A THING SHE DOES, THIS FLIRTING...

I GUESS WE BETTER GO FIND 'EM.

YEAH, I GUESS.

Y'KNOW, DAVID, I WORRY ABOUT YOU. I THINK YOU SUPPRESS A LOT OF HOSTILITY. I MEAN, I NEVER HEARD YOU ONCE SNAP BACK AT LINDA.

BOTTLING UP ANGER'S BAD FOR YOU, I KNOW

YEAH, WELL, I'VE JUST LEARNED TO MAKE ALLOWANCES, I GUESS.

I THINK THEY WENT THROUGH THIS DOOR, HERE...

UH, I MADE A MISTAKE. THIS IS ONE OF THE DOORS I READ ABOUT THAT DOESN'T LEAD ANYWHERE.

YOU THINK THEY TOOK THE NEXT DOOR ALONG, THE ONE THAT LOOKS LIKE A CLOSET?

JUDY?

UPSTAIRS, FRANNY MITCHELL COULDN'T GET HER WIG TO SET STRAIGHT AND WISHED, NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT THE OTHERS HADN'T BEEN SO STRICT WITH AMY CAMBRIDGE OVER THAT 'NO MIRRORS" RULE

THE PROBLEM WAS, IF THE WIG WAS TOO FAR BACK, IT DIDN'T COVER THAT LITTLE BLACK BEAUTY SPOT THAT WILL ROACH'S WIFE HAD MADE ON FRANNY'S TEMPLE ..

HEY, LINDA? THE OTHERS ARE STILL DOWNSTAIRS...

THEN AGAIN, IF THE WIG LEFT THE BACK OF THE HEAD UNCOVERED, THAT WAS WORSE.

HEY, LINDA, COME ON' IT LL TAKE 'EM HOURS TO FIND US!

IF THE WIG SAT TOO FAR FORWARD, YOU COULD SEE FRANNY'S BRAINS.

LINDA? ARE YOU...

OH-HO'

WELL, HEY, YOU WERE WAITING UP HERE FOR ME ALL THE *TIME*, HUH? LOOKS LIKE I DIDN'T GET MY SIGNALS CROSSED AFTER A..L..

HA HA! HEY! CUT THAT OUT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU NUT?

OH, OH, BOY. Y'KNOW, LINDA, YOU'RE REALLY WASTED ON DAVID. I MEAN, HE'S A NICE GUY AN I WOULDN'T WANNA HURT HIM, BUT

AW, JEEZ, YOU'RE TERRIFIC. YOUR SKIN, YOUR LIPS..

...YOUR HAIR...

AAAAAAAAA!

OH, GOD! OH, GOD, IT TOUCHED ME! EEEUUUGH! LEMME OUT!

LEMME OUT OF..

...HERE...

BACK IN THE BEDROOM, FRANNY SIGHED AND THREW THE MATTED HAIRPIECE INTO THE CORNER. SHE HEARD THE SCREAM, EXACTLY THREE STORIES LONG.

...AND THEN THERE WAS ONLY THE DOOR, SLAMMING MONOTONOUSLY IN THE SUMMER WIND.

CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING

BANG

BANG

BANG

ROD?

THAT BANGING... IS THAT YOU?

DAVID? LISTEN, DAVID, IF YOU'RE DOING THIS AS SOME KIND OF FEEBLE-MINDED JOKE BECAUSE I LAUGHED AT YOUR GHOST STORY...

HMM. COMING FROM DOWN HERE...

OKAY, ROD! I KNOW IT'S YOU. DAVID'S SCARED OF LOUD NOISES!

Y'KNOW, IF YOU WANT TO ATTRACT MY ATTENTION, THERE ARE OTHER WAYS OF...

ED CLUTTY AND THE DUTCHMAN HAD BEEN IN THE SÉANCE ROOM ALMOST AN HOUR, ARGUING OVER THOSE MARKED CARDS.

THERE WASN'T MUCH LEFT OF EITHER ONE.

THE DUTCHMAN STILL HAD ENOUGH OF ONE ARM TO HOLD HIS GUN, WHEREAS ED WAS BY NOW LITTLE MORE THAN A PAIR OF LEGS.

NO.

LUCKILY, HIS RIGHT HAND HAD BEEN BLOWN OFF INTACT, STILL HOLDING THE GUN. SHELTERING UNDER THE OAK TABLE, IT PROVIDED COVERING FIRE.

OUTSIDE THE SÉANCE ROOM, THE PASSAGEWAY BEGAN TO FILL UP WITH THE FIRING SQUAD VICTIMS, WHO HAD COME TO SEE WHAT ALL THE NOISE WAS ABOUT.

NONONO NONONO

OH, PLEASE. OH, PLEASE, NO..

THE ONES WHOSE HANDS WEREN'T TIED BEHIND THEIR BACKS MOVED THEIR COLD FINGERS OVER HER FACE, READING HER, REDUCING HER BEAUTY TO BRAILLE.

NHHUHHH

HUHHJHHH

THE LAST THING SHE NEEDED BEFORE SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS WAS ED CLUTTY'S HEAD, SCREAMING ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIS MOPPING, SHUFFLING LEGS FROM ONE OF THE THIRTEEN FIREPLACES

THEN, EVEN THAT WAS LOST IN THE DEAFENING GUNFIRE.

BANG

BANG

BANG

ROD? DAVID? LINDA? YOU IN THERE?

SHE HAD FOUND THE SKYLIGHT SET INTO SOLID FLOOR, AND THE CORRIDOR THAT NARROWED FROM THREE YARDS TO SIX INCHES.

SHE'D FOUND A CLOSET ONLY HALF AN INCH DEEP, AND ANOTHER THE SIZE OF AN APARTMENT.

SHE HADN'T FOUND ANY PEOPLE.

STUPID, STUPID, STUPID..

EVENTUALLY, SHE LOOKED INSIDE THE FREE-STANDING WARDROBE. IN A HOUSE LIKE THIS, ONE DOOR WAS AS LIKELY AS ANOTHER.

AAAA!

INSIDE THE WARDROBE, SHE COULD HEAR THE HAMMERSTROKE OF THE GIANT HOOVES, GETTING LOUDER, CLOSER...

THE WARDROBE WAS PERHAPS A FOOT DEEP AT MOST.

SHE REALIZED WITH A FEELING OF DISTANCE AND CLARITY THAT THIS WAS AN HALLUCINATION. UNEXPECTEDLY, SHE REMEMBERED AN OLD PORKY PIG CARTOON AND LAUGHTER RIPPLED UP FROM WITHIN HER.

INSIDE THE WARDROBE, THE THUNDER GREW NEARER.

ABSURD.

COMPLETELY ABSURD.

THE DIN OF THE HOOFQUAKE RUMBLED AWAY DOWN THE ADJOINING PASSAGEWAYS, GONE IN SECONDS.

THE STENCH OF MUSK AND HIDE WOULD LINGER FOR WEEKS.

BY NOW, THE EXCITEMENT HAD SPREAD THROUGH THE WHOLE SIX ACRES OF THE HOUSE.

THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE AIR.

DOWN THE DRUNKEN, TWISTING CORRIDORS THEY THRONGED, SPILLING OUT ONTO THE LANDINGS AND BALCONIES. THERE WERE CELEBRITIES, INCLUDING ONE CLANTON BROTHER, AND NONENTITIES.

THREE IN FIVE WERE INDIANS.

OH, GOD.

LIKE THE CREATURES OF ROSEWOOD AND KENNESOOK AND LOUISIANA BEFORE THEM, THE SPIRITS OF SAN MIGUEL WERE ANIMATED BY SOME BARELY UNDERSTOOD AND DISTANT IMPULSE...

A SHADOW FROM FAR AWAY, REACHING OUT TO TOUCH THEM

THE SUICIDES HAD FELT IT MISTAKING IT FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT AND RESURRECTION. THEY WERE IN THE BATHROOMS, MAKING THEMSELVES PRESENTABLE.

LINDA? OH, GOD, LINDA, WHERE ARE YOU?

THE HOUSE BUZZED WITH THE BREATHLESS WHISPER OF DEAD VOICES, THE LEADEN SHUFFLING OF DEAD FEET. VISITORS.

THEY HAD VISITORS.

FRANNY MITCHELL DECIDED TO COVER THE HOLE IN HER TEMPLE WITH AN ORNAMENTAL FLOWER..

TODD WEATHERBY, WHO'D SHOT HIS BELOVED FAMILY ON CHRISTMAS EVE, 1942, LED THEM DOWNSTAIRS TO THE HALL.

THE LITTLE GIRLS LOOKED LIKE THEY HAD THEIR BEST RED SUNDAY RIBBONS IN THEIR HAIR, BUT OF COURSE, THEY HADN'T.

THE REAR STAIRWELL WAS COMPARATIVELY EMPTY.

ON THE FIRST-FLOOR LANDING, A SOUR-FACED CHEROKEE STOOD SCOWLING, MOONLIGHT GLEAMING THROUGH HIS STOMACH.

HE WOULD FIND LINDA. HE WOULD GET THEM BOTH OUT OF THERE. HE WOULD DO THIS THING, AND NOTHING WOULD STOP HIM...

GOD WILLING.

IF THE FATES DECREED.

KNOCK WOOD.

YOU CAME.

A WOOD ELEMENTAL. YES, OF COURSE. IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE. HAHAHA!

HAHAHAHA

A WOOD ELEMENTAL COME TO PROTECT ME FROM THE GHOSTS

GHOST?

GOD, YES. HUNDREDS OF THEM, THOUSANDS. EVERYTHING EVER KILLED BY A CAMBODIAN WEAPON.

THAT'S WHY THEY MADE HER BUILD SUCH A BIG HOUSE FOR THEM. SO MANY GUNS. SO MANY DEAD PEOPLE.

THE SOUND OF THE HAMMERS MUST NEVER STOP, THEY SAID. MADE HER BUILD A HOUSE TO APPEASE THEM SO THEY'D LET HER BE

BANG! BANG! BANG! HAHAHAHA!

OH, GOD.

MY WIFE. MY WIFE'S IN THERE SOMEWHERE. MY FRIENDS. PLEASE HELP THEM.

PLEASE.

BUILT WITH NAILS, THE WAY CAMBODIAN BULLETS BUILT A COUNTRY...

I LEAVE HIM SOBBING IN THE MOONLIT HALL AND FOLLOW PASSAGEWAYS AS COMPLEX AND TWISTING AS GUILT ITSELF.

EVERYTHING SMELLS OF CORDITE...

AS I APPROACH... THE HEART OF THE HOUSE... THE GHOSTS ARE EVERYWHERE.

OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY... I SEE... A HUNTER, HIS FACE .. A STICKY. RED THUMBPRINT...

A TIDE... OF DEAD RABBITS . SWARMS ABOUT HIS FEET... THOSE WITH SHATTERED SPINES OR LEGS . DRAGGING THEMSELVES.. PAINFULLY... BLOODILY...

IN THE KITCHENS... THE COWARDS ARE GATHERED THEIR FACES. . TURNED TO THE WALL IN SHAME... A SINGLE POPPY... AT THE CENTER. . OF EACH BACK.

FINALLY... I ARRIVE .. AT THE EYE... OF THE MADNESS.

IN MY MIND... I HEAR ITS NAME... SPELLED OUT... IN A MORSE... OF TABLE RAPPINGS... AND SQUEAKING WINEGLASSES...

THE SÉANCE ROOM.

FROM THE SEVENTH FIREPLACE... A LIQUID BUBBLING VOICE.. IS SCREAMING .. ABOUT MARKED CARDS...

THE WOMAN IS ALIVE.

THE THINGS... INSIDE THE ROOM... ARE NOT.

UNDER THE TABLE... A SEVERED HAND... AND A COMPLETE FORE- [redacted] .. CLAW AND STRUGGLE .. FOR POSSESSION... OF A SIX-GUN...

I KNOW... WHAT I... MUST DO...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

TO QUIET THESE GHOSTS... THERE MUST... BE NOISE.

THE SOUND...

THE SOUND OF THE HAMMERS...

THE SOUND OF THE HAMMERS... MUST NEVER... STOP.

THEY HEAR IT.

THROUGHOUT. THE HOUSE... I SENSE.. THEIR SUDDEN HUSH.

I HEAR... THE INDRAWN BREATH .. OF THOSE .. WHO HAVE NOT BREATHED... IN CENTURIES...

MY FISTS... FALL AGAINST... THE DUSTY OAK.. WOOD UPON WOOD... A DEADMAN'S TATTOO..

BANG.

BANG

BANG.

AND DOWN... THE WRITHING HALLWAYS ...THEY COME RUNNING...

LIMPING...

CRAWLING...

BANG.

BANG.

BANG.

SCRAMBLING INTO THE ROOM . THEY FLOW IN RAGGED, STUMBLING CURRENTS.. TOWARDS THE FIREPLACES.

CLAMBERING OVER EACH OTHER .. THEY SCRABBLE THROUGH THE HEARTHS... AND THEN UPWARDS..

I SEE A WOMAN.. WET SOMETHING FOOTBALL-SHAPED.. FROM THE SEVENTH FIREPLACE CARRYING IT WITH HER UP INTO THE SOOTY DARK.

BANG BANG.

BANG

FROM FORTY-SEVEN CHIMNEYS... A CHURNING BLACK GOUT. OF CORDITE-SCENTED SMOKE ...BELCHES OUT . INTO THE SUMMER WIND..

AND THE WIND... DISPERSES IT.. WITHOUT TRACE.

FROM THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE . I HEAR THE SLOW, EVEN BREATH. OF AN UNCONSCIOUS WOMAN

THERE IS NO OTHER SOUND.

THE HOUSE . IS SILENT

I CARRY.. THE WOMAN OUTSIDE... FOR HER MATE .. TO FIND..

AND THEN I GO... LEAVING THEM... TO THEIR TENDER .. RECONCILIATION.

LINDA!

OH, THANK GOD YOU GOT OUT. YOU'RE OKAY

WHAT HAPPENED?

WHERE'S ROD?

ROD?

ROD! WHERE IS HE? YOU DIDN'T LEAVE HIM IN THERE?

H-HIM AND JUDY DIDN'T COME OUT. I...I DON'T THINK THEY'RE GOING TO.

NO ... OH, NO! WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE HIM? HOW COME YOU GOT OUT?

LINDA? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? LOOK. YOU'RE UPSET I KNOW YOU WERE FRIENDLY WITH ROD, BUT

FRIENDLY?

YOU JERK, I'VE BEEN SLEEPING WITH HIM FOR SIX MONTHS!

LEMME THINK. WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO TOMMY, CALL THE COPS AN AMBULANCE, SOMETHING ..

WE LIKE THEIR CAR, RIGHT? ONLY YOU HAVE TO DRIVE. I'M TOO SHOOK UP OH, JEEZ, ROD.

WELL? DAVID, DON'T JUST STAND THERE! ARE YOU COMING, OR NOT?

YES, LINDA.

I'M COMING.

YOU CAME, THEN?

GOT THE MESSAGE I LEFT WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND, EH?

YES. I CAME AS YOU REQUESTED.

I AM NO LONGER CERTAIN WHY

I KNOW THAT YOU WILL ONLY GIVE ME ANOTHER RIDDLE... ANOTHER ENIGMA...

ANOTHER SENSELESS DESTINATION...

NEVER... THE TRUTH.

THE TRUTH? IS THAT ALL? WELL, WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY?

LADS? HE WANTS THE TRUTH! COME ON OUT AND SAY HELLO.

COME ON.

HE WON'T BITE YOU.

CONTINUED ON PAGE [illegible] OF SWINE

THUH THUH *THIS IS IT?* IT'S LUH, IT'S LUH, IT'S LIKE ONE OF THE SPAWN OF *SHUB-NIGGURATH* THAT LUH LUH *LOVECRAFT* MENTIONED... HEY, CONSTANTINE, THIS IS PRETTY *INTENSE*, Y'KNOW? I MEAN, JEEZ...

CONSTANTINE..? WHO...? THIS IS *BENJAMIN COX*, AND THIS IS *FRANK NORTH*. THEY'RE *ASSOCIATES OF MINE*. THEY'LL BE *HELPING* US WITH THESE *FINAL STAGES*.

FINAL STAGES...? THAT'S RIGHT. THERE *SHOULD* BE *OTHERS*, BUT OUR *OPERATIVE* IN *LONDON* LOST TOUCH, SO *SISTER ANNE MARIE'S* GONE TO *FIND* HER. HEY, *JOHN*, IT'S GETTIN' *LATE*, MAN. WE BETTER BE GOING.

GOING? WHERE...? "*WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHERE ARE WE GOING?*" Y'KNOW, YOU'RE WORSE THAN A BLOODY KID ON A DAYTRIP TO BLOODY *SKEGNESS!* WE ARE *GOING* TO *GHOW* YOU THIS *TRUTH* THAT YOU'RE *SO KEEN ON!*

SEE, AS IT *HAPPENS*, I'VE GOT A COUPLE OF *FRONT ROW TICKETS* FOR THE *END OF THE UNIVERSE*. I THOUGHT IT'D BE BEST TO USE THEM *NOW*. I MEAN, YOU NEVER *KNOW*...

THERE MAY NOT BE A *SECOND PERFORMANCE*.

EPILOGUE:

THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL TAKE MY GUN FROM ME IS TO PRY IT FROM MY COLD, DEAD FINGERS

WELL, SIR, I'D SAY YOU'VE MADE A WISE PURCHASE.

CAN I WRAP THAT FOR YA?

THERE.

YEAH, THAT'S A FINE PIECE. I SELL A COUPLE HUNDRED A YEAR, AN' KNOCK WOOD I AIN'T NEVER HAD A COMPLAINT YET.

COURSE, IF YOU USE IT A LOT, YA GOTTA TAKE CARE OF IT..

OH, WELL, Y'KNOW, I DON'T THINK I'LL BE USING IT THAT OFTEN

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP.

PLEASURE. GOOD HUNTIN'.

LEAVING THE STORE, THE UNFAMILIAR WEIGHT BENEATH HIS ARM SEEMED TO MAKE HIM LIGHT-HEADED, AS A KIND OF COUNTERBALANCE.

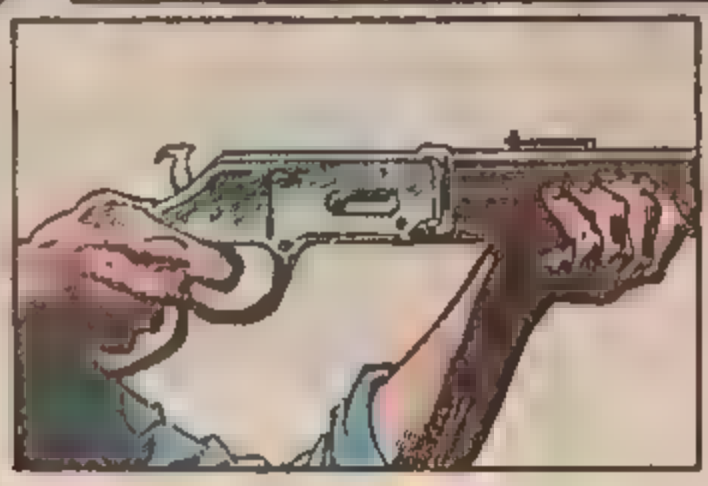
"I SELL A COUPLE HUNDRED A YEAR." THAT'S WHAT THE MAN HAD SAID..

HE FELT STRANGELY COMPLETE, STRANGELY REASSURED BY THE THOUGHT, PART OF A NOBLE, SECRET FRATERNITY.

DRIVING HOME TO HAVE HIS LITTLE TALK WITH LINDA, HE COULD HEAR THE BLOOD, POUNDING IN HIS TEMPLES...

THE SOUND...

THE SOUND OF HAMMERS...



THE SOUND OF THE HAMMERS MUST NEVER STOP.

NEXT:

REVELATIONS

SPECIAL CRISIS CROSS OVER
46
75¢
CAN. 95¢
U.K. 35p
MAR. 86
SWAMP THING
BY
ALAN MOORE
STEPHEN BISSETTE
AND JOHN TOTLEBEN
1935
1985

"The third Angel blew his trumpet, and a great star shot from the sky, flaming like a torch. The name of the star was Wormwood."

--REVELATIONS, 8:10

SOMETHING WAS EATING THE SKY

EVERYONE WHO'S EVER HOPED TO BE LONG DEAD BY DOOMSDAY LOOKED UP, AND THE FEELING IN THEIR STOMACHS WAS JUST AS THEY'D ALWAYS KNOWN IT WOULD BE.

IT SEEMED UNFAIR, BUT THEN, IT HAD TO HAPPEN IN SOMEBODY'S LIFETIME.

SUBSTANCE AND SPACE MELTED BEFORE THE AWFUL ASSAULT OF NOTHING AND NOWHERE. TIME BUCKLED, COLLAPSING IN UPON ITSELF, FUTURE AND PAST EMBEDDING IN THE PRESENT.

TEDDY

HANES

ON MAIN STREET, CUTLASSES SPARKED AGAINST ANTI-RAD ARMOR AS THE WORLD ENDED.

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IN BACK ALLEYS FILLED WITH FIRELIGHT AND PANDEMONIUM, THE LEATHER-SKINNED PREDATORS OF TWO EARS BATTED AMIDST THE STENCH OF GARBAGE AND GASOLINE AND ROASTING LIZARD MEAT
SWAMP THING
THUH-THUH-THUH-THAT'S ALL, FOLKS
A '97 MODEL FORD BASILISK SKIDDED THROUGH A FLOCK OF BEWILDERED DODOS, KILLING SEVERAL.
IN THE DISCO, NEANDERTHALS ROLLED SCREAMING ON THE FLUORESCENT WHITE DANCE FLOOR, BOWELS EMPTYING IN TERROR.
IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES, AND IT WAS ALL OF THEM AT ONCE.
IT WAS THE END...
MACY'S SALE
SALE CRAZY DAY
JEWELRY SALE
PERFUME
...AND IN THE END, THERE WERE NOT WORDS ENOUGH TO ENCOMPASS IT.
REVELATIONS
ALAN MOORE WRITER
STEPHEN BISSETTE and JOHN TOTLEBEN ARTISTS
KAREN BERGER EDITOR
TATJANA WOOD COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER

HAHAHA! HEY, COX, YOU DEVELOPIN' A SENSE O' HUMOR, OR WHAT? THAT WAS EXACTLY LIKE PORKY PIG!

LUH-LUH-LIKE WHO?

I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT ALL, BENJAMIN, MY OLD SON...

FAR FROM IT.. THE REAL CRUNCH IS YET TO COME, AFTER ALL THESE FIREWORKS HAVE BLOWN OVER.

THAT'S WHAT WE'VE GOT TO GET READY FOR.

BENJAMIN, YOUR JOB IS TO KEEP CONTACT WITH SISTER AYNE-MARIE IN LONDON, IN CASE SHE FINDS JUDITH.

HAH! IF THE PENGUIN WANTED TO GET IN TOUCH FROM LONDON, SHE'D JUST SHOUT

OKAY SO WHAT ABOUT YOU AND, UH.. Y'KNOW. THE BIG GUY.

WELL, OUR TRANSPORT SHOULD BE ARRIVING ANY MOMENT.

IN FACT, YOU SEE THAT BIG THING THAT LOOKS LIKE A STAR, RIGHT UP THERE?

YEAH?

I SAID YEAH, I SEE IT. SO WHAT?

YA GONNA MAKE A WISH ON IT OR SOMETHING?

FRANK, YOU'LL BE NEEDED ON THE LAST LEG, SO YOU GO BACK TO L.A. AND WAIT FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS. GIVE CHERYL A BIG KISS FOR ME.

SURE ROMGUES OR ORDINARY?

JUST ORDINARY

THERE IS... A WHITE MOMENT... THAT TUGS THE SOLID EARTH .. FROM UNDER MY FEET.. LIKE A MAGICIAN'S TABLECLOTH...

...AND THEN SOMETHING BIG... WITHOUT HANDS ... PICKS ME UP.. SHUFFLING ME... LIKE A DECK OF CARDS...

...AND I AM GONE.

THE PHYSICAL WORLD UNFOLDS .. INTO A SHAPE BEYOND MATHEMATICS...

I BECOME LOST... IN A GALLERY OF OPPRESSIVE AND UNEASY FORMS... THAT MY MIND... IS TOO FLAT... TO GRASP.

I TRY... TO CLOSE MY EYES... BUT I HAVEN'T... GOT ANY..

NICE PLACE, EH?

CONSTANTINE . ?

WHAT...HAPPENED? WE WERE. ON THAT HILL... THERE WAS A FLASH OF BRILLIANCE.. AND THEN...

AND THEN THERE WAS...

WHERE .. ARE WE...?

WE'RE ON A SATELLITE. IT BELONGED TO A BLOKE CALLED *THE MONITOR.*

HE'S *DEAD* NOW

CAN'T SEE THIS PLACE LASTING LONG WITHOUT HIM, SOMEHOW.

BUT *WHY*. ARE WE *HERE*? THAT *CHAOS*.. THAT WE SAW.. IN THE *SKY*...

IF THE WORLD IS...*ENDING*. I MUST BE...BY THE SIDE.. OF MY *WIFE*...

THE *WORLD*? THE *WORLD* ISN'T ENDING. IT'S THE *MULTIVERSE* THAT'S *ENDING*.

MULTIVERSE...?

A WHOLE SERIES OF PARALLEL *UNIVERSES*, PARALLEL *EARTHS*...

SOMETHING'S EATING ITS WAY *THROUGH* THEM, LIKE A *MAGGOT* MUNCHING THROUGH A STACK OF *MAPS*.

IN ORDER TO SURVIVE, THE *REMAINING* WORLDS ARE BEING SORT OF FOLDED *TOGETHER*, MAKING THEM *STRONGER*.

IT'LL *WORK* A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL FINISH UP *DEAD*, BUT IT'LL *WORK*.

BUT IF THE WORLD.. WILL BE SAVED.. THEN WHY...?

THE *MATERIAL* WORLD WILL BE SAVED, BUT THERE'S *MORE* TO *LIFE* THAN THE *MATERIAL* WORLD.

BLOODY HELL, YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW *THAT*! NOW COME ON.

SHIK!

LOCK

...THE *PARTY'S* BEEN UNDER WAY FOR *AGES*.

LET'S *MINGLE*

THE ROOM.. IS FULL OF PEOPLE... A SURREAL AND GLIMMERING MARDI GRAS OF COSTUMES.. AND SEMBLANCES TOO STRANGE... TO BE COSTUMES...

COME ON. DON'T BE SHY.

A GOLDEN MAN... STANDS ABOVE THE MULTITUDE... AND EXPLAINS... WHAT CONSTANTINE... HAS ALREADY TOLD ME... CONCERNING THE MERGING... OF THE EARTHS...

HIS NAME ..IS LUTHOR. IT RIPPLES. THROUGH THE CROWD... A WHISPERED UNDERCURRENT .OF SURPRISE... AND SUSPICION..

LUTHOR.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE NAME... BRINGS A COLD TINGLE... OF PREMONITION.

SENSING.. NO IMMEDIATE THREAT .. I LET IT GO .

A CREATURE MADE OF COLD FOG GLARES... AND DRIFTS ASIDE... TO LET ME PASS..

A FERAL CHILD.. WRINKLES HIS NOSE... AND DRAWS BACK... REPULSED..

ARE THESE... THE INHERITORS OF THE EARTH?

ARE WE TO HAVE .. A BRAVE NEW AGE. . OF GODS.. AND MONSTERS.?

I PUSH... THROUGH THE CROWD... SEEKING SOMEONE... THAT I KNOW...

... FINDING ONLY STRANGERS.

CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

STRANGER...?

THEN YOU TOO.. ARE A PART.. OF THIS...

WE ARE ALL A PART OF IT... ALTHOUGH, LIKE YOU, MY ACTIVE ROLE WILL COME LATER, WHEN THE CLAMOR OF DYING WORLDS HAS ABATED.

I AM UNCERTAIN .. OF WHAT MY ROLE ...IS TO BE...

I HAVE TRAVELED... ACROSS AMERICA... WITNESSING ATROCITIES BEYOND TELLING .. LEARNING TRUTHS... THAT HAVE LEFT ME.. NONE THE HAPPIER.

HOW... DOES MY ODYSSEY... RELATE TO THIS?

THE TRUTH MOST PAINFUL TO THE HEART IS THAT WHICH MAKES THE SPIRIT STRONGER...

...AND IT IS THE STRENGTH OF SPIRIT THAT WILL BE NEEDED WHEN THE PHYSICAL CRISIS IS OVER.

TAP TAP

COULDN'T HAVE PUT IT BETTER MYSELF.

JOHN CONSTANTINE?

I HEARD THAT YOU HAD PERISHED DURING THE EXORCISM IN NEWCASTLE LAST WINTER...

NAH. THE KIDDIE DIED AND I WAS IN A LOONY BIN FOR A FEW WEEKS, BUT OTHER THAN THAT IT WENT REALLY WELL.

THE SAME CONSTANTINE THE SAME BLACK HUMOR...

IS THERE ANY OTHER KIND?

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US, I HAVE TO TAKE OUR MUTUAL FRIEND HERE TO SEE THE MAN IN CHARGE. SEE YOU LATER.

OH, YES.

YOU MAY DEPEND UPON IT.

FUNNY CHAP. HOW DOES HE KEEP HIS SHOES SO SHINY WITH ALL THAT WALKING ABOUT?
CONSTANTINE ... YOU PROMISED ME ANSWERS.
INSTEAD, THE QUESTIONS. KEEP GETTING BIGGER
THAT IS SURELY THE HUMAN CONDITION MR CONSTANTINE CAN HARDLY BE BLAMED
UH, THIS IS ALEX LUTHOR. HE'S RUNNING THE SHOW SINCE THE MONITOR POPPED HIS CLOGS
ALEX IS LESS THAN A YEAR OLD, BUT HE'S BIG FOR HIS AGE.
MR CONSTANTINE HAS TOLD ME OF THE EFFECT THAT THE CRISIS WILL HAVE UPON THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS SURROUNDING EARTH.
I UNDERSTAND YOU WILL BE DEALING WITH THAT.
I WILL...?
THAT'S RIGHT.
THIS SORT OF PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IS BOUND TO CAUSE TEMPORARY DISTURBANCES ON THE PSYCHIC PLANE.
PROBLEM IS THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ANTICIPATED THE DISTURBANCE AND PLAN TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.
AH YES THE SOUTH AMERICAN CULT THAT YOU MENTIONED...
CULTS ? ONE YEAR-OLD MEN ? THIS IS INSANITY! WHY SHOULD PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION AFFECT THE IMMATERIAL REALMS ?
EVERYTHING'S INTERCONNECTED, STUPID. LOOK, DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT
YOU KNOW ALREADY HOW GOOD A TELEPORTATION SYSTEM ALEX HAS SET UP HERE.
GO BACK TO EARTH
GO AND SEE FOR YOURSELF

AND HE WENT

...AND HE SAW

AND AT THE END OF THE WORLD, THE HORRORS AND MARVELS COULD NOT BE COUNTED.

I-IT'S NOT REAL FUR. OH, GOD, PLEASE, LOOK, I HAD TO ACCEPT IT! IT WAS A GIFT!

STOP

YARK! YARK!

ADJUSTING RAPIDLY TO AN UNFAMILIAR SITUATION, LIVER-EATING JOHNSON AND HIS MOUNTAIN MEN HAD STAKED OUT THE JUNKYARDS AND WERE TRAPPING ATTACK DOGS

AT CRAZY EDDIE'S, CLYDE BARROW SAT AND WATCHED THE END OF THE FILM HE'D ROUND OVER AND OVER AGAIN ON THE V.C.R. WONDERING IF HE SHOULD TELL BONNIE

THERE WAS LAUGHTER AND WEEPING AND SOMEBODY WAS SCREAMING FOR SOMEBODY ELSE TO HOLD THEIR HAND, PLEASE, PLEASE JUST HOLD

IT WAS DEAFENING

...BUT THE NOISE INSIDE HIS HEAD WAS WORSE.

INSIDE HIS HEAD, HE HEARD THE MOANS, THE WHIMPERING THAT PEOPLE MADE DEEP IN THEIR SOULS. HE HEARD THE BEDLAM OF A MASS MIND FACED WITH EXTINCTION

HE HEARD THE ETHEREAL TERRITORIES SURROUNDING OUR OWN SHUDDER IN RESPONSE

KNOWING ALREADY WITHIN HIMSELF THAT CONSTANTINE HAD BEEN RIGHT, HE LEFT THE CITY BY HIS OWN UNIQUE METHOD, TO SEE IF RAMOSS WERE AS BAD ELSEWHERE..

ELSEWHERE, BEYOND THE CENTERS OF INDUSTRY AND POPULATION, THINGS WERE WORSE

KNITTING NEW FLESH FROM THE WEEDS AND MOSS AND CREEPER, HE FELT THE CHAOS OF THE FORTUNED WILDERNESS BEFORE HE'D GROWN EYES TO SEE IT

A JACKBOKER FROM THE MANHATTAN SALTBOGG OF SOHO HAD MANAGED TO BRING DOWN A YOUNG ICTHYOSAURUS WITH HIS WHORPOON, BUT THE ALLIGATORS WERE CLOSING IN FAST

HE SAW A WOMAN WITH A PULPY ORANGE GROWTH UPON HER SHOULDER STUMBLE UNWITTINGLY INTO A FIELD OF WATER HYACINTHS

AS THEY FARTED AND SHE SANK INTO THE WATER BENEATH, THE GROWTH OPENED ITS MOUTH AND BEGAN TO BELLOW.

GIANT HAILSTONES FELL FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, GLITTERING IN THE BRIGHT SUNSHINE

A WITHERED CYPRESS TREE COMBUSTED SPONTANEOUSLY, AND AS TINY APES WITH OPPOSABLE THUMBS RAN SHRIEKING FROM THE BLAZING UNDERGROWTH, HE DECIDED HE HAD SEEN ENOUGH.

THE FLAMES CAUGHT HIS BODY, BUT HE'D ALREADY LET IT GO.

IN A WORLD BEYOND REASON, HE NEEDED A PLACE TO THINK.

TWEP

PWIC

...AND SO HE HEADED FOR THE HILLS.

WELL?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT SO FAR?

CONSTANTINE...? I THOUGHT... YOU WERE STILL ON THE SATELLITE...

THE SATELLITE WAS DESTROYED. THINGS ARE MOVING FAST, CHIEF. TOO BLOODY FAST.

DO YOU STILL THINK THE SPIRITUAL PLANE IS BEYOND DAMAGE?

NO..YOU WERE RIGHT...

THE REPERCUSSIONS.. OF THIS CARNAGE. WILL BE VAST.. ON ALL THE LEVELS OF BEING...

ON THIS LEVEL, THE DAMAGE CAN BE CONTAINED..

OF COURSE NOT! DON'T YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING? THIS CRISIS HAS BEEN BREWING SINCE TIME BEGAN.

THE BRUJERÍA SIMPLY FORESAW IT AND USED IT AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR THEIR OWN PLANS.

...BUT THEN IT'S NOT THIS LEVEL THAT THE BRUJERÍA ARE INTERESTED IN.

THE BRUJERÍA...? ARE THEY THE ONES... THAT HAVE CAUSED, THIS CRISIS..?

THEN... WHO ARE THEY...?

THEY'RE A SECRET SOCIETY OF MALE WITCHES THAT HAVE EXISTED FOR CENTURIES IN THE FORESTS OF PATAGONIA, AT THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF SOUTH AMERICA.

THEIR CENTRAL COMMITTEE LIVES IN EXILE. THEY'RE CALLED THE COUNCIL OF THE [illegible]AVI.

"IF YOU'RE SELECTED TO JOIN THE BRUJERÍA, YOU FIRST HAVE TO STAND UNDER A WATERFALL OF THE THRAIGUÉN RIVER FOR FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS.

APPARENTLY, THIS WASHES AWAY ALL EFFECTS OF A CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

"NEXT, YOU HAVE TO CATCH A SKULL, THROWN BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR FROM THE CROWN OF A TRICORN HAT.

[illegible] THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN AN INITIATION THAT STICKS WITH MINE. I DUNNO WHY.

"AFTER THAT, YOU MUST KILL YOUR BEST FRIEND, TO SHOW THAT YOU'RE COMPLETELY WITHOUT COMPASSION.

"THEN YOU SIGN A DOCUMENT WITH BLOOD FROM YOUR OWN VEINS AND SO ON YOU KNOW

"THE USUAL STUFF"

BUT THE WORST THING IS THE WAY THEY MAKE THEIR WAISTCOATS...

NO. NO, I TELL A LIE. THAT'S NOT QUITE THE WORST THING...

...BUT IT'S THE NEXT-TO-WORST THING.

"TO MAKE THEIR WAISTCOATS, THEY FLAY THE SKIN FROM THE BREAST OF A RECENTLY DISINTERRED CHRISTIAN CORPSE

"HUMAN FAT IS SLIGHTLY PHOSPHORESCENT, YOU SEE, SO THE WAISTCOAT GLOWS IN THE DARK

"IMAGINE THEM, EH? WALKING IN PROCESSION, BETWEEN THE TREES,

"IN THE DARK

"IN THEIR WAISTCOATS."

YOU SAID THAT THE WAISTCOATS WERE NOT THE WORST THING.

YEAH. WELL, THE WORST THING IS... LOOK, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO HEAR THIS? IT'S JUST... OH... NEVER MIND...

THE WORST THING IS THE *INVUNCHE*. THE *INVUNCHE* IS THE GUARDIAN OF THE CAVE

A FEW MONTHS AGO, ONE THREW A GIRLFRIEND OF MINE OUT OF A WINDOW

I AM SORRY. I DID NOT MEAN TO UPSET

NO, NO. THAT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S OKAY. I CAN TALK ABOUT IT

SEE, THE WHITE *INVUNCHE*, THEY TAKE A LONG TIME TO GROW UP, AND

...AND THEN THEY DISJOINT THE *ARMS*, A-AND THE *LEGS*, AND THE *HANDS*, AND, AND THEN THEY... THEY

LOOK, I'M SORRY. I'LL TELL YOU SOME OTHER TIME, OKAY? I'VE NOT BEEN SLEEPING MUCH LATELY

I'M A BIT HOKEY

ANYWAY, I'M SURE YOU GET THE PICTURE.

THEY'RE BASTARDS, EVIL, POISONOUS, MURDERING BASTARDS.

THEY SAW THIS CRISIS COMING, AND THEY'VE BEEN BUILDING UP TO IT SLOWLY, GETTING EVERYBODY IN THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND...

"USING THEIR INFLUENCE, THEY'VE FORCED THE DARK STUFF TO THE SURFACE ALL OVER THE WORLD. I ONLY SHOWED YOU THE TROUBLE SPOTS I THOUGHT YOU COULD LEARN FROM.

"EACH INCIDENT HAS INCREASED THE GENERAL BELIEF IN THE PARANORMAL BY DEGREES, UNTIL THE WHOLE PSYCHIC ATMOSPHERE IS LIKE A BALLOON RIPE FOR BURSTING.

"BELIEF IS POWER...

"... AND THE BRUJERIA INTEND TO USE THAT POWER TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING MONSTROUS

"IN YOUR TRAVELS, YOU'VE SEEN SOMETHING OF THE BLACKNESS WITHIN THIS CONTINENT.

"IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND ALL YOU'VE SEEN, BECAUSE LATER, THAT UNDERSTANDING WILL BE VITAL..."

...BUT YOU MUST ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE DARKNESS YOU'VE SEEN IN THE HEART OF AMERICA IS NOT A FRACTION OF THE DARKNESS THAT THE BRUJERIA HOPE TO DRAG DOWN UPON US.

NOT A FRACTION

THEY PLAN TO BRING SOMETHING BACK.. I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHAT OR FROM WHERE.

SISTER ANNE-MARIE THINKS IT'S SATAN. JUDITH. OUR CONTACT IN LONDON... THINKS IT'S SOME SORT OF ENERGY FIELD.

POOR OLD BEN COX IS CONVINCED IT'S BLOODY CTHULHU.

YOU SEE, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS...

...BUT WE KNOW IT ISN'T ANYTHING GOOD.

AND THEY . WILL UNLEASH. THIS ENTITY.. UPON THE EARTH...?

NO! FOR GOD'S SAKE PAY ATTENTION! THIS IS IMPORTANT. I SAID EARLIER THAT EARTH WASN'T THE PLANE THEY WERE INTERESTED IN.

BLOODY HELL, THEY ALREADY OWN THE EARTH, HAVE DONE FOR CENTURIES.

THIS TIME, THEY'RE GOING FOR THE BIG ONE.

SEE, AFTER THE CRISIS, EVERYTHING WILL BE UNSTABLE AND VULNERABLE FOR A WHILE... INCLUDING THE SPIRITUAL PLANE

THAT'S WHEN THE BRUJERÍA WILL BRING BACK THEIR ENTITY.

IT'S HEAVEN, YOU SEE?

THEY PLAN TO DESTROY HEAVEN.

SO ANYWAY, THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO SOUTH AMERICA WITH A BIT OF LUCK, WE CAN STOP THEM BEFORE THEY COMPLETE THE ENTIRE CONJURING RITUAL

IF NOT... WELL, THEN WE'LL HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE.

THE BRUJERIA'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE GATHER IN A CAVE, SOMEWHERE IN THE FORESTS BEYOND QUINCAVI...

...BUT BEFORE WE GO THERE, WE HAVE ONE MORE STOP TO MAKE, A LITTLE FURTHER NORTH.

ANOTHER DELAY? BUT WHY .?

BECAUSE I ALWAYS KEEP MY PROMISES.

I PROMISED YOU KNOWLEDGE.. REAL KNOWLEDGE. THAT WASN'T A TRICK, Y'KNOW. I MEAN, SURE, IT HELPED TO KEEP YOU STRINGING ALONG...

... BUT IN THE END, I ALWAYS DELIVER

THERE'S A GROVE IN THE AMAZON RAIN FORESTS. A SPECIAL GROVE. THE LOCAL INDIANS CALL IT "THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES."

EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO KNOW... EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW... IS THERE.

IT'S IN BRAZIL, NEAR THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER TEFE. DON'T WORRY.. GET YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN A HUNDRED MILES AND IT WILL PULL YOU THERE, LIKE A MAGNET.

IT'S SOMETHING WORTH SEEING, I PROMISE YOU.

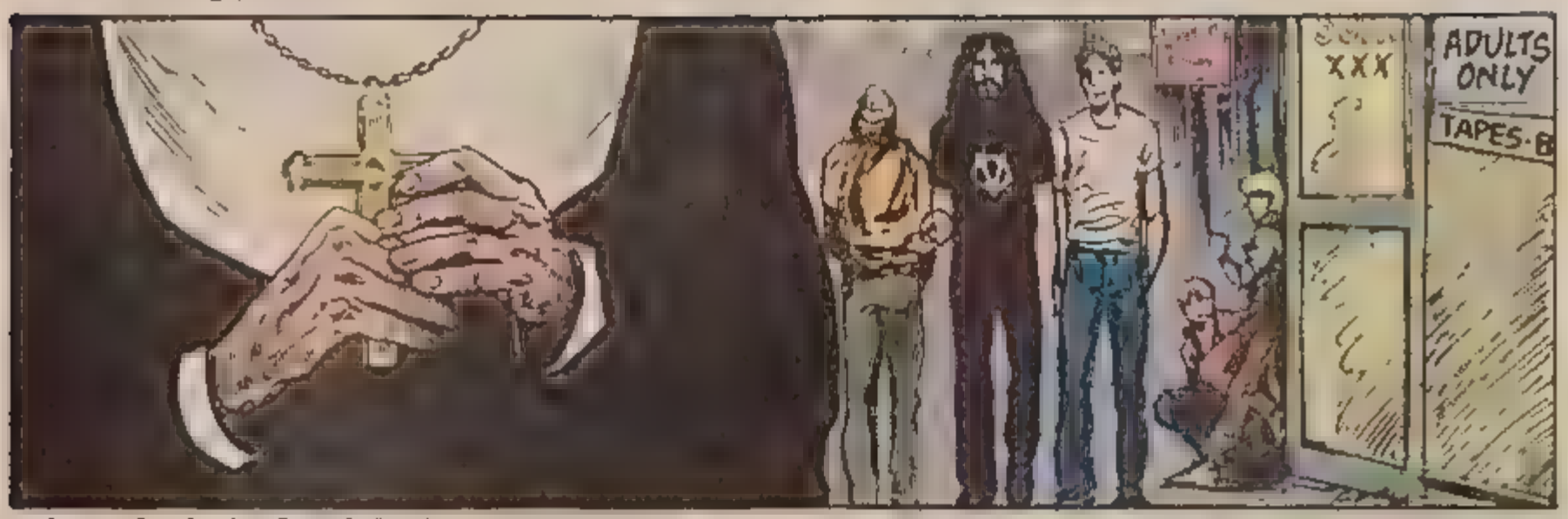
I'VE GOT SOME BUSINESS TO SETTLE BEFORE I LEAVE, SO WHY NOT TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO AND SAY A PROPER GOOD-BYE TO YOUR MISSUS?

SEE, WE MIGHT BE GONE FOR QUITE A WHILE.

I MEAN, WHO KNOWS?

WE MIGHT BE GONE FOREVER.

LONDON:



SISTER ANNE-MARIE HAD BEEN IN LONDON FOR A WEEK, VISITING THE FILTHY SOHO NIGHT CLUBS THAT STANK LIKE TOILETS UNTIL HER NOSE ACQUIRED A PERMANENT WRINKLE.

THE STREETS AND ALLEYS TANGLED TOGETHER IN AN IMPENETRABLE KNOT: WARDOUR STREET, BERWICK STREET, QUEEN ANNE'S COURT...

EMERGING ONTO CHARING CROSS ROAD BY FOYLE'S BOOKSHOP, SHE BECAME AWARE OF TWO THINGS. FIRSTLY, SHE WAS LOST.

SECONDLY, SHE WAS BEING FOLLOWED

WHEELING AROUND, GLARING, SHE COULD DETECT NO ONE.

A YOUTH WITH CROPPED HAIR AND LEAD-SHOT EYES NOTICED HER LOOKING AND SAID SOMETHING VULGAR TO HIS GIRLFRIEND. TATTOOED UPON HIS BICEP WAS A UNION JACK.

CONFUSED, SHE TURNED AWAY. HAD SHE BEEN MISTAKEN? IMAGINING THINGS? HER HOTEL WAS JUST OFF BELSIZE PARK, PERHAPS SHE'D BEST RETURN THERE.

TO AVOID GETTING LOST, SHE DECIDED TO TAKE THE TUBE FROM LEICESTER SQUARE.

THAT WAY WAS THE MOST DIRECT ROUTE.

THAT WAY WAS SAFEST.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

BOARDING THE FIRST NORTHBOUND TRAIN ON THE NORTHERN LINE, SHE WAS RELIEVED TO FIND HER CARRIAGE EMPTY AND SMOKELESS.

LEICES... SQUARE

TAKING THE BLACK BOOK FROM HER BAG, SHE OPENED IT AT RANDOM AND BEGAN TO READ...

CAMDEN TOWN

"THEN OUT OF THE SEA I SAW A BEAST RISING. IT HAD TEN HORNS AND SEVEN HEADS. ON ITS HORNS WERE TEN DIADEMS, AND ON EACH HEAD A BLASPHEMOUS NAME."

THE TRAIN STOPPED AT CAMDEN. NOBODY GOT ON.

"THE BEAST I SAW WAS LIKE A LEOPARD, BUT ITS TEETH WERE LIKE A BEARS, AND ITS MOUTH..."

CATCHING A SOUND, SHE STOPPED READING. SOMETHING HAD GIGGLED. SOMETHING IN THE SEAT BEHIND HER...

THE TRAIN STOPPED.

JERKING FROM HER SEAT, SLAMMING THE "OPEN DOOR" BUTTON, SHE STUMBLED OUT ONTO THE PLATFORM, PROPELLED BY A TERROR THE URGENCY OF WHICH SHE DID NOT UNDERSTAND...

THE SIGN ON THE UNLIT, DESERTED PLATFORM SAID MORNINGTON CRESCENT SWALLOWING HARD, SHE RECALLED THAT MORNINGTON CRESCENT WAS CLOSED ON WEEKENDS.

FROM THE FAR END OF THE PLATFORM, FROM THE EMPTY SHADOWS BEYOND THE EMPTY NESTLÉ'S CHOCOLATE MACHINE, SOMETHING SNICKERED AND BEGAN TO WALK TOWARDS HER.

AS THE TRAIN DEPARTED, SHE REALISED HER ERROR.

HER TRAIN HAD STOPPED FOR A POINTS-CHANGE... NOT TO LET PASSENGERS OFF AT ALL.

STRANGELY, IT WAS WALKING BACKWARDS...

NO... NO, THAT WASN'T QUITE IT. ITS FEET WERE WALKING FORWARDS, BUT ITS HEAD, ITS HEAD WAS...

UNDERSTANDING CAME, AND SHE BIT INTO ONE COLD WHITE HAND TO ABORT A SCREAM.

TURNING, SHE FLED, A WHEEZING BLIND THING THROUGH THE TILED, SUBTERRANEAN PASSAGEWAYS.

THE CAGE-LIKE ELEVATORS, NATURALLY ENOUGH, WERE NOT WORKING. BUT THERE WERE THE EMERGENCY STAIRS, SPIRALING UP TOWARDS THE STREETS ABOVE...

THE STAIRS WERE SHALLOW, REQUIRING SMALL, TIRING STEPS, AND THE STAIRCASE ITSELF SEEMED ENDLESS. BEHIND HER, THE FOOTSTEPS WERE ONLY A SINGLE TWIST OF THE SPIRAL AWAY.

SHE RAN ON, HOLDING HER HABIT UP ABOUT HER CALVES...

STAIR CLOSE

...AND EVENTUALLY, SHE REACHED THE TOP.

CLINK

MUSTERING ALL HER FAITH AND COURAGE SHE TURNED, RESOLVING TO LOOK THE DEATH BEHIND HER SQUARELY IN THE FACE...

...BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO HAVE ONE

"No one can recall the memory of a time when the Central Committee did not exist some have suggested that the sect was in embryo even before the emergence of man . perhaps the term 'central committee' is a synonym for BEAST." --BRUCE CHATWIN, 'IN PATAGONIA'

NEXT: THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES

47
75¢
CAN 95¢
U.K. 35p
APR 86
SWAMP THING
1935
50
1985
By ALAN MOORE, STAN WOCH & RON RANDALL

WELL, SIR, IF I MAY START AT THE BEGINNIN' MY NAME'S HOWARD FLECK, I'M A PHOTOGRAPHER

I WAS OUT ON THE BAYOU LAFOURCHE THIS MORNIN', JUST EAST O' HOUMA, TAKIN' SOME PICTURES.

"MOSTLY, I TRY AND SELL PICTURES TO THE NATURE MAGAZINES. SO, THERE I WAS, HIDIN' IN THE BUSHES WITH MY TELEPHOTO TRAINED ON THIS HERON.

"WELL, JUST AS I PRESS THE SHUTTER, IT FLEW OFF, ALL KINDA STARTLED. I WONDERED WHAT IN HELL HAD MADE IT FLY AWAY LIKE THAT. .

"...THEN I SAW THIS WOMAN, OKAY?

"I WAS STILL IN THE BUSHES, SO SHE, UH, HADN'T ACTUALLY SEEN ME, NOT AT THIS POINT

"SHE WAS, UH, A VERY STRIKING YOUNG LADY SHE HAD SORT OF PUNKY, NEW-WAVER HAIR. VERY STRIKING. I THOUGHT, Y'KNOW, I'D GET SOME SHOTS OF HER.

"I MEAN, THERE'S MORE 'N ONE KINDA MAGAZINE BUYS PICTURES, IF YOU FELLOWS CATCH MY DRIFT.

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DC Comics Inc A Warner Communications Company

"I MEAN, NATURALLY, I WOULD HAVE, UH, ASKED HER PERMISSION, AFTER THE EVENT, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK THE, UH, SPONTANEITY BY TELLIN' HER I WAS THERE RIGHT OFF

"SO, ANYWAY, THERE SHE WAS IN THE WATER, AND I'M SNAPPIN' AWAY THERE. .

"...AND THEN THIS AWFUL WET SORTA GREEN-BLACK MASSOTY-LOOKIN' PIECE O' BUSINESS JUST DROPPED RIGHT ON HER SHOULDER!

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS. I'M TRYIN TO PAN ACROSS TO SEE, RIGHT? I MEAN, IT HAPPENED SO FAST, IT COULDA BEEN A SNAKE, OR A 'GATOR OR ANYTHING...

"I WAS SO RATTLED I COULDN'T GET IT IN MY VIEWFINDER. IT WAS RIGHT ABOUT THEN I GOT A WHIFF OF ITS SCENT. IT SMELLED LIKE MANURE! I STEADIED THE CAMERA ..

"...AND THERE IT WAS."

IT WAS *TALKIN'* IN THIS DREADFUL, SLOW, CREAKY KINDA VOICE, BUT I DIDN'T *CATCH* ANY OF IT.

THEY WERE BEYOND *EARSHOT*, SO ONLY THE *BUSHES* COULD HEAR WHAT THEY *SAID* OR JUDGE IF IT WAS *PROPER*.

G-2367

THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES

ALAN MOORE . STAN WOCH and RON RANDALL . KAREN BERGER
WRITER ARTISTS EDITOR

TATJANA WOOD . JOHN COSTANZA
colorist letterer

MOO) SOMETHING SMELLS STRONG THIS MORNING.

A DEAD MUSKRAT I ARROWHEAD IT. INTO ME. YESTERDAY IT'S ALMOST GONE

MUM) SPEAKING OF RATS, I GOT A CALL FROM CONSTANTINE HE WAS IN L.A SOMEWHERE I COULD HEAR A GIRL IN THE BACKGROUND.

HE SAID HE'D MEET YOU NEAR THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER TEFE' TOMORROW.

THEN IT IS TIME TO LEAVE HE PROMISES ME THAT THIS IS THE FINAL STAGE THAT IN SOUTH AMERICA I SHALL LEARN... EVERYTHING!

YEAH? WELL, I DON'T TRUST HIM YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

NOW THAT I CAN EXPLORE MYSELF. I AM BEYOND ANY HARM, BUT WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT WHILE I AM GONE..?

ME? I'LL BE FINE SINCE THAT TROUBLE AT THE JAGUAR HOUSE EVERYTHING'S BEEN RUNNING SMOOTHLY

IT'S LIKE I GOT SOMEONE WATCHING OVER ME.

AS THE LORD'S MY WITNESS, I AIN'T NEVER SEEN NOTHING SO DISGUSTIN'! THERE WAS BUGS AND MOLD ON THAT THING, AN' SHE WAS KISSIN' IT!

I WAS SO SHOCKED, I ALMOST FORGOT TO RELOAD MY CAMERA

YOU'VE NEVER TRAVELED AS FAR AS SOUTH AMERICA BEFORE ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN DO IT?

I THINK SO. DISTANCE ISN'T THE GAME WHEN I'M IN THE GREEN.

IT SHOULDN'T ...TAKE LONG..

IT WILL BE WORTH IT TO UNLOCK THE SECRETS AND MYSTERIES. THAT CONSTANTINE SPEAKS OF...

ABBY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT..?

SURE IT IT WAS JUST SOMETHING YOU SAID. I SUDDENLY ALMOST REMEMBERED THIS DREAM I HAD A WHILE BACK, BUT

NAH IT'S GONE FORGET IT.

IT WAS ONLY SOME STUPID DREAM..

...AND IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO TALK ABOUT RIGHT NOW.

F'R'INSTANCE, YOU KNOW I HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE BREAKFAST?

PLEASE. BE MY GUEST.

"I ALMOST THREW UP. I TELLYA, I SAW THINGS THAT'D TURN A MAN'S STOMACH BEFORE THEY FINALLY UP AN' LEFT' GENTLEMEN, I WENT THROUGH PURGATORY FOR THESE PICTURES."

AS I SEE IT, YOU OUGHTA BE GRATEFUL I'M OFFERIN' 'EM TO YOU FIRST

PICTURES LIKE THESE, I COULD TAKE 'EM AND SELL 'EM ANYWHERE...

"... ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD"
THE MEMORY OF OUR GOOD-BYE KISS.. IS WITH ME ..AS I CRACKLE THROUGH THE GREEN LATTICE... THAT GIRDS THE PLANET...
OUT OF LOUISIANA. .HUMID AND SENSUOUS...DOWN THROUGH THE MINERAL RICH SOIL OF MEXICO... THROUGH NICARAGUA...AND COLOMBIA.
...AND FINALLY . TO BRAZIL...
GEORGETOWN
COLOMBIA
AMAZON
TEFÉ
CONCORDIA
BRAZIL
BELO HORIZONTE
BOLIVIA
RIO DE JANEIRO
SÃO PAULO
BUENOS AIRES
SOUTH OF CONCORDIA .I FIND THE SOURCE ..OF THE TEFÉ.
THE GREEN ABOUT ME SUGGESTS EXCITING NEW POSSIBILITIES...FOR FORM...AND COLOR...
I LOCATE ..A SINGLE SEED.. WITHIN THE WEB...
...AND I BEGIN TO GROW.
SQUIP
SQUITTER
THWOP
PWORCH
KNUCK
FLIT
SHLEP
GLUTCH
KNUPP
PWIC
SKNOCK

VERY NICE.

YOU MUST INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR TAILOR.

...AND ALSO VERY PUNCTUAL, I MIGHT ADD.

THE HELICOPTER I CHARTERED ONLY DROPPED ME OFF HERE TWENTY MINUTES AGO...

...WHICH IS ABOUT AS LONG AS I COULD KEEP THE LOCALS PACIFIED.

THEY WERE GETTING VERY SHIRTY ABOUT ME BEING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AND I DON'T TALK THEIR LANGUAGE WELL ENOUGH TO REASSURE THEM.

STILL, YOU'RE HERE NOW...

.. SO I DON'T SUPPOSE THEY'LL GIVE US MUCH BACK-CHAT.

STRANGE . THEY SEEM MORE REVERENT THAN FRIGHTENED.

WHY SHOULD THEY BE FRIGHTENED? THEY'VE SEEN YOUR SORT BEFORE

"MY SORT"..?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I MEAN YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST SWAMP ELEMENTAL BY A LONG SHOT. OVER THE CENTURIES, CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CONSPIRED TO MAKE OTHERS LIKE YOU WHEN THE NEED AROSE.

CONSTANTINE ?

WHERE ARE THEY LEADING US...?

JUST BE PATIENT, AND YOU'LL SEE.

NOW, GIVEN THAT ALL THESE PLANT ELEMENTALS WERE AS INDESTRUCTIBLE AS YOU AND GIVEN THAT YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF ANY AROUND LATELY, WHERE D'YOU SUPPOSE THEY WENT, EH?

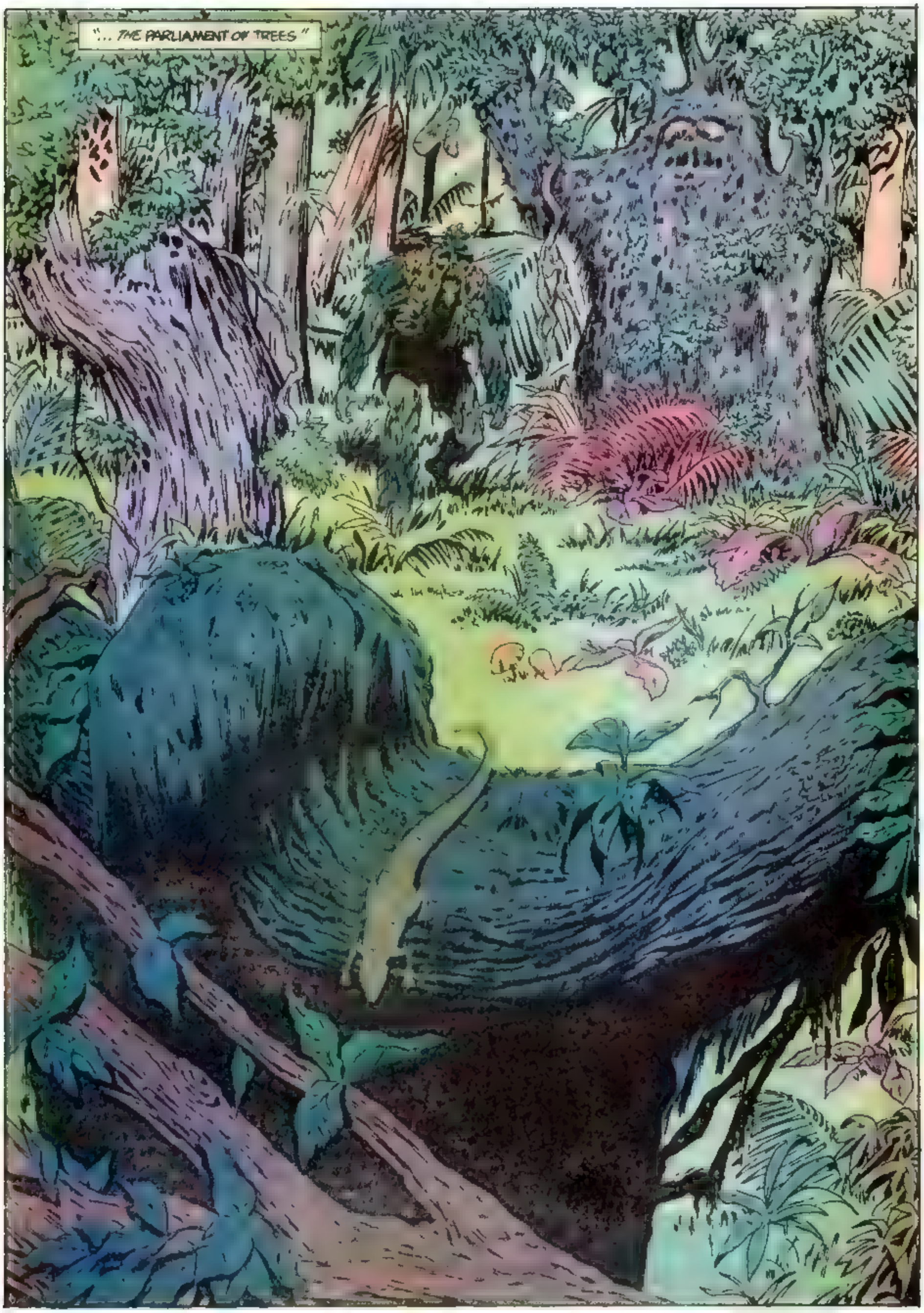
WHEN THEY'D LIVED TOO LONG AND GROWN TOO WISE FOR THE DISTRACTIONS OF THE WORLD, WHERE DID THEY GO?

IT'S LIKE ELEPHANTS. YOU EVER HEAR OF THE ELEPHANT'S GRAVEYARD? WELL, IT'S LIKE THAT...

WHOOPS.

ANYWAY, LISTEN, I CAN'T COME WITH YOU BEYOND THIS POINT HUMANS AREN'T ALLOWED, UNLESS THEY'RE CALLED.

YOU GO ON AHEAD AND YOU'LL SEE IT THE WHOLE SHOOTING MATCH..


"... THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES"

HUMMINGBIRDS HOVER... IN THE WARM BLUR OF THE GROUNDFOG LIKE BULLETS .. FROZEN IN FLIGHT .

IN THEIR PERFUMED GARDEN THE ROOTED GIANTS MAINTAIN A GIGANTIC SILENCE ..

THE AFTERNOON LIGHT FALLS IN SHAFTS .. GOLDEN AND TIMELESS. AND I AM TOUCHED .. BY AN UNBEARABLE NOSTALGIA A HAUNTING SENSE OF FAMILIARITY... AND DEJA VU.

I KNOW THIS PLACE

ANY MOMENT NOW A PARROT WILL SCREAM

EACH NEW TEXTURE EACH LURID NEW COLOR BRINGS A PANG OF RECOGNITION EVERY DETAIL EVERY INCONGRUITY

A MODEL AIRPLANE HANGS FROM A BRANCH TIED WITH THREAD.

A BREEZE .. IT'S IS ITS BRIGHT PLASTIC WING AND I KNOW .. AN INEXPLICABLE SADNESS

HIGH ABOVE... THE VIVID RED SHRIEK. OF A PARROT SPLASHES OUT OVER THE GREEN OF THE TREETOPS

CAN IT BE, THEN?

AM I HOME?

ONLY THE GIANTS HUGE AND MUTE... CONTINUE TO DISTURB ME..

IS THIS... HOW THEY HAVE CHOSEN.. TO SPEND ETERNITY...? MOTIONLESS... UNSPEAKING... RAINWATER POOLING... IN THE SOCKETS... OF THEIR EYES...?

I WAS TOLD... THAT I WOULD.. FIND ANSWERS HERE ..

I'VE FOUND MARVELS.. I'VE FOUND A GARDEN.. OF ENIGMA. AND A GRAVEYARD .OF LEGENDS ..

NO ANSWERS.

NO.. QUESTIONS.

YOU... HEARD ME...?

HEARD ME... THOUGH I DID NOT SPEAK ?

FLESH .. SPEAKS

WOOD... LISTENS.

YOU . HAVE APPROACHED . THE PARLIAMENT ..

YOUR ANCESTORS . WELCOME YOU...

ANCESTORS...?

BUT HOW CAN I HAVE... A LINEAGE... WHEN MY CREATION... WAS AN ACCIDENT..?

SPRING .. FOLLOWS WINTER .. AUTUMN .. FOLLOWS SUMMER

THERE ARE... NO ACCIDENTS...

YOU... ARE A NECESSARY CREATION OF THE WORLD . AS ARE WE ALL...

BUT... I WAS NOT BORN . A PLANT ELEMENTAL . IF THAT IS TRULY WHAT I AM

MY CONSCIOUSNESS . . IS BORROWED . FROM A DEAD MAN . .

I . AM NOT . . LIKE YOU .

YOU... ARE EXACTLY... LIKE ME .

I... WAS ALEX OLSEN...

AEONS I WAS A SCIENTIST. WORKING IN A SWAMP. EXPERIMENT SABOTAGED. EXPLOSION IT KILLED ME.. TOOK ME AWAY FROM MY BELOVED LINDA

LINDA..? BUT

BUT THAT, IS MY STORY. I WAS ALEC HOLLAND...

COINCIDENCE IS THE PATTERN OF THE WORLD'S BARK

THE STORIES OF ALL THAT ARE ROOTED HERE. HAVE THE SAME QUALITIES.

SEE YOUR IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR STANDS YONDER AS AN EXAMPLE

HIS NAME. WAS ALBERT MICHLEMER.. A GERMAN PILOT. SHOT DOWN... INTO A BOG. IN 1942

HE DIED IN FLAMES BUT HIS MIND SURVIVED. ALBEIT DAMAGED AND CONFUSED AND ROSE AGAIN.. DRESSED IN DIRT.. AND WEEDS.

AFTER A DECADE OF RETURNED. AIMLESS WANDERING HE FOUND... THE PARLIAMENT

HE BROUGHT THE IVY WITH HIM A DAILY REMINDER.. OF HIS FORMER LIFE.

NO. OTHER TRACE.. REMAINS HE HAS BEEN ROOTED HERE. FOR THIRTY-TWO YEARS.

ALL OUR STORIES ARE SUBTLY. DIFFERENT YET THE UNDERLYING PATTERN REMAINS CONSTANT

A MAN DIES IN FLAMES A MONSTER. RISES FROM THE MIRE SACRIFICE.. AND RESURRECTION THAT IS ALWAYS. OUR BEGINNING.

OUR ENDING IS ALWAYS HERE IN THIS GROVE

AND YOU WHO HAVE INHERITED. OUR GREEN MANTLE

HAVE YOU ALSO COME TO JOIN US. IN OUR REST ?"

I. CANNOT REST .. NOT YET

I HAVE MUCH TO DO. IF THE DANGER THAT THREATENS THIS WORLD IS TO BE Aaverted

I CAME SEEKING KNOWLEDGE. THAT MIGHT HELP ME.. IN MY TASK

YOU ARE LIKE US YOU ARE AN EAR AMS KNOWLEDGE. IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT.

YOU MAY ADDRESS THE PARLIAMENT

BUT HOW? CAN THEY STILL SPEAK.?

FLESH SPEAKS. WOOD LISTENS

I ALONE HERE STILL REMEMBER HOW TO KNOW WORDS

IF YOU WISH TO SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PARLIAMENT YOU MUST SIT

AND BE STILL

AND LISTEN

"LET YOUR ROOTS...INTERTWINE... WITH OUR ROOTS...

"LET YOUR MIND INTERTWINE

. WITH OUR MIND "

THE WORLD SLIPS FROM BETWEEN MY CLUMSY FINGERS...AND I TUMBLE.. AMONGST THE SOULS...OF GIANTS...

FOR A MOMENT .I UNDERSTAND...HOW VERY SMALL..MY LARGEST THOUGHTS... HAVE BEEN...AND I KNOW TERROR...

THEN SUDDENLY...THE COLD SHOCK... OF MENTAL IMMERSION...

I AM DROWNING...IN THEIR ANCIENT INTELLIGENCE...

THEIR BOTTOMLESS...MEMORIES...

IN ENGLAND...800 YEARS AGO..I WAS ALF OLDLAND. STUART FISBY...SET MY CROFT AFIRE..HE WANTED TO BED.. MY BELOVED LIL..I RAN OUT.. BLAZING..INTO THE FEN...

AFTER I ROSE..MEN CALLED ME... 'JACK-IN-THE-GREEN"...

DECEMBER, 1932... I WAS ALBERT HOLLERER ...AS I TOOK OFF.. 'STILLE NACHT, HEILIGE NACHT'.. DRIFTED FROM THE BAR... LATER..THERE WERE FLAMES...IN THE COCKPIT. DARK TREES HURTLING UP AT ME... I CALLED..MY WIFE'S NAME...TWICE...

IN OLD CHINA... THEY CALLED ME... 'GHOST HIDING IN THE RUSHES"...

IN ..PREHISTORIC AFRICA ..I WAS GREAT URL...AND THE ELEPHANTS... ATE FROM MY HAND...

SO MANY LIVES...

SO MUCH KNOWLEDGE...

THEY UNDERSTAND SO MUCH ABOUT THIS CURIOUS. VEGETABLE.. FORM OF OURS.

HOW TO USE IT. TO ITS FULLEST POTENTIAL...

I SEE NOW.. HOW LIMITED... HOW HUMAN...I HAVE BEEN IN MY THINKING..

THE ABILITY TO REGROW TO TRAVEL EFFORTLESSLY IN THE GREEN THIS SEEMED MARVELOUS TO ME...

BUT. THERE IS SO MUCH MORE...

SO MUCH THAT I HAD NOT IMAGINED...

I HAVE RESTRICTED MYSELF.. TO ONE SIZE ..TO ONE SHAPE

I HAVE NEVER ATTEMPTED TO ANIMATE .DEAD OR CARVEN WOOD. WITH MY CONSCIOUSNESS. NEVER THOUGHT... TO MANIPULATE INSECTS... WITH MY SCENTS AND JUICES...

SO MANY POSSIBILITIES.

EACH FASCINATING HUNT... EACH DRILLING NEW CONCEPT. LEADS ME DEEPER. INTO THE UN-MAPPABLE CONTINENT.. OF THEIR MIND.

SOMETHING ABOUT MULTIPLE BODY CONTROL..? SOMETHING ABOUT..

... TIME TRAVEL? COULD IT BE? I VENTURE FURTHER..

AND AT LAST.. THEY NOTICE ME..

WHAT IS IT?

A NEW MIND. A NEW MIND IN THE PARLIAMENT..

IT IS VERY YOUNG. WHAT DOES IT WANT?

ETERNAL TREES. PLEASE FORGIVE THIS INTRUSION..

I CAME. SEEKING KNOWLEDGE. A GREAT DANGER THREATENS.. I MUST KNOW. HOW TO USE MY POWER.. TO ITS BEST ADVANTAGE..

POWER? POWER IS NOT THE THING TO BE CALM WITHIN ONESELF, THAT IS THE WAY OF THE WOOD.

POWER TEMPTS ANGER, AND ANGER IS LIKE WILDFIRE. AVOID IT.

WE SENSE DISTURBANCE AND UNCERTAINTY IN YOU. WHY SO?

I..I DO NOT KNOW.. I HAVE TRAVELED THIS COUNTRY... AND SEEN MUCH.. THAT IS EVIL.... IT PREYS... UPON MY MIND... I WONDER.. IF NATURE CAN BE JUST. TO ALLOW SUCH THINGS...

FLESH DOUBTS. WOOD KNOWS.

IF YOU WISH TO UNDERSTAND EVIL, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE BARK, THE ROOTS, THE WORMS OF THE EARTH. THAT IS THE WISDOM OF AN ENT-KING.

APHID EATS LEAF LADYBUG EATS APHID, SOIL ABSORBS DEAD LADYBUG. PLANT FEEDS UPON SOIL...

IS APHID EVIL? IS LADYBUG EVIL? IS SOIL EVIL?

WHERE IS EVIL, IN ALL THE WOOD?

BUT .. I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. HOW THIS IS TO HELP ME...

THE PARLIAMENT HAS SPOKEN. THE AUDIENCE IS CONCLUDED.

BUT I STILL HAVE... SO MUCH TO ASK. SO MANY..

QUESTIONS.

THEY. SHUT ME OUT. EXCLUDED ME FROM THEIR MIND...

BUT IT WAS SO APTLY I WAS NOT GIVEN.. A DIRECT ANSWER...

NOT YET

THE PARLIAMENT HAS SPOKEN..

YOU HAD BEST. LEAVE NOW.

YOU WERE TOLD. TO AVOID POWER TO AVOID ANGER PERHAPS. YOU WERE NOT LISTENING.. AS WOOD SHOULD LISTEN

GO NOW. FOR THIS. IS NOT YOUR RESTING PLACE..

WELL?

WHAT DID THEY SAY?

THEY SAID THAT I MUST AVOID POWER. AND BEWARE OF ANGER.

.. AND THEY ASKED ME WHERE IS EVIL IN ALL THE WOOD?"

IS THAT ALL?

BLOODY HELL, I'VE READ BETTER HOROSCOPES IN THE DAILY MIRROR! WOOD ELEMENTALS! THEY'VE ALL GOT DRY ROT, Y'KNOW. ALL OF 'EM!

"WHERE IS EVIL IN ALL THE WOOD." PFUH! THEY SHOULD HAVE ASKED ME...

I COULD HAVE TOLD 'EM! I COULD HAVE SAID "WELL, AS IT HAPPENS, CHIEF, IT'S WHERE WE'RE MEETING OUR CHUMS TOMORROW."

DOWN THERE, MATE, DOWN ON THE ISLE OF CHILOE IN THE FORESTS OF QUINCAYT.

THERE IS EVIL IN ALL THE WOOD

CHILE

ACIFIC

ARGEN

"HIDING IN A CAVE . .

"WEARING A WAISTCOAT OF HUMAN SKIN...

"PLANNING THE DESTRUCTION OF HEAVEN."

IT'S A GOOD THING I'M ON THE CASE, WITH A TEAM OF EXPERTS. THEY'LL MEET US ON CHLOE TOMORROW... ABANK, BEN, SISTER ANNE-MARIE. SAME TEAM WE HAD IN NEWCASTLE...

UHH .

NOT THAT THAT'S A PARTICULARLY GOOD EXAMPLE.

ANYWAY, EVERYTHING'S FINE! WE DON'T NEED ANY HELP FROM A BUNCH OF GERIATRIC EVERGREENS. "WHERE IS EVIL, IN ALL THE WOOD?" MAKES YOU WANT TO SPIT

UH, CHIEF?

YOU ALL RIGHT?

THEY DID NOT .. WANT ME .. CONSTANTINE .

THEY WERE CREATURES, . LIKE ME..

LIKE ME...

.. AND THEY CAST ME OUT.

HEY! YOU CAN'T JUST THROW ME OUT!

IT'S LATE, MR FLECK, AND THESE OFFICES ARE CLOSING. THANK YOU FOR LEAVING US YOUR PRINTS, AND WE'LL CALL YOU WHEN WE'VE REACHED A DECISION.

GOOD NIGHT, NOW.

HOUMA DAILY COURIER

HUH! SLIMY LITTLE CREEP! HE THOUGHT HE WAS SLICKER 'N NASAL DETRITUS ON A DOOR HANDLE!

WHAT ABOUT HIS PICTURES? SHOULD WE LOSE 'EM?

NAH! NO PAPER SOLD OUTSIDE A SUPERMARKET WOULD USE THESE!

I MEAN, IT'S JUST A GUY IN A SUIT. ON THIS ONE YOU CAN SEE THE ZIPPER LOOK... ISN'T THAT A ZIPPER?

I DUNNO... THE BUILD, THE ANATOMY'S ALL WRONG..

I RECOGNIZE HER... THE WOMAN IN THESE PICTURES. RECOGNIZE HER HAIR

YOU KNOW HOW WE SOMETIMES HAVE TROUBLES WITH OUR LITTLE SANDRA, AND HOW SHE ATTENDS THAT ELYSIUM LAWNS PLACE?

THIS WOMAN WORKS THERE, LOOKIN' AFTER KIDS.

KIDS? WELL, THAT GIVES US A PARENTAL CONCERN ANGLE...

I SAY WE PRINT...

... AND BE DAMNED!

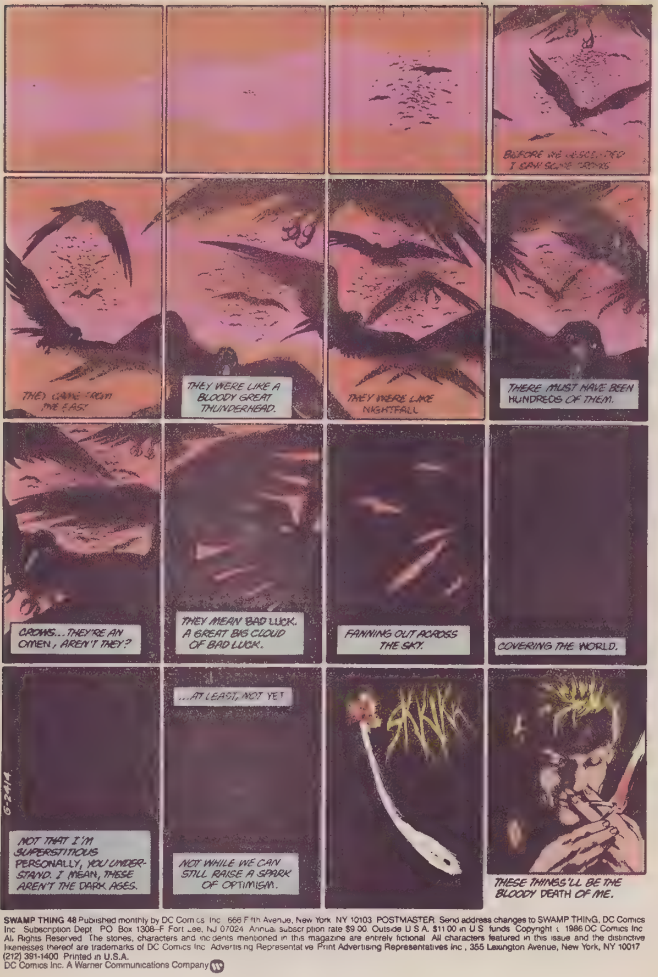
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MARTY? YOU'RE KEEPING AWFUL QUIET.

TOO DAMN RIGHT IT DOES! MY SANDY GOES TO THAT PLACE, AN' ITS STAFF SPEND THEIR WEEKENDS HALF-NAKED WITH GUYS IN KINKY RUBBER SUITS!

DAMN RIGHT THERE'S PARENTAL CONCERN!

NEXT: A MURDER OF CROWS

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
48
75¢
CAN 95¢
U.K. 40p
MAY 86
SWAMP THING
Howard Chaykin casts THE SHADOW!
BY ALAN MOORE & JOHN TOTLEBEN


BEFORE WE LEAVE...TOO I SAW SOME CROWS.
THEY CAME FROM THE EAST.
THEY WERE LIKE A BLOODY GREAT THUNDERHEAD.
THEY WERE LIKE NIGHTFALL.
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN HUNDREDS OF THEM.
CROWS... THEY'RE AN OMEN, AREN'T THEY?
THEY MEAN BAD LUCK. A GREAT BIG CLOUD OF BAD LUCK.
FANNING OUT ACROSS THE SKY.
COVERING THE WORLD.
...AT LEAST, NOT YET
NOT THAT I'M SUPERSTITIOUS PERSONALLY, YOU UNDERSTAND, I MEAN, THESE AREN'T THE DARK AGES.
NOT WHILE WE CAN STILL RAISE A SPARK OF OPTIMISM.
SKKK
THESE THINGS'LL BE THE BLOODY DEATH OF ME.

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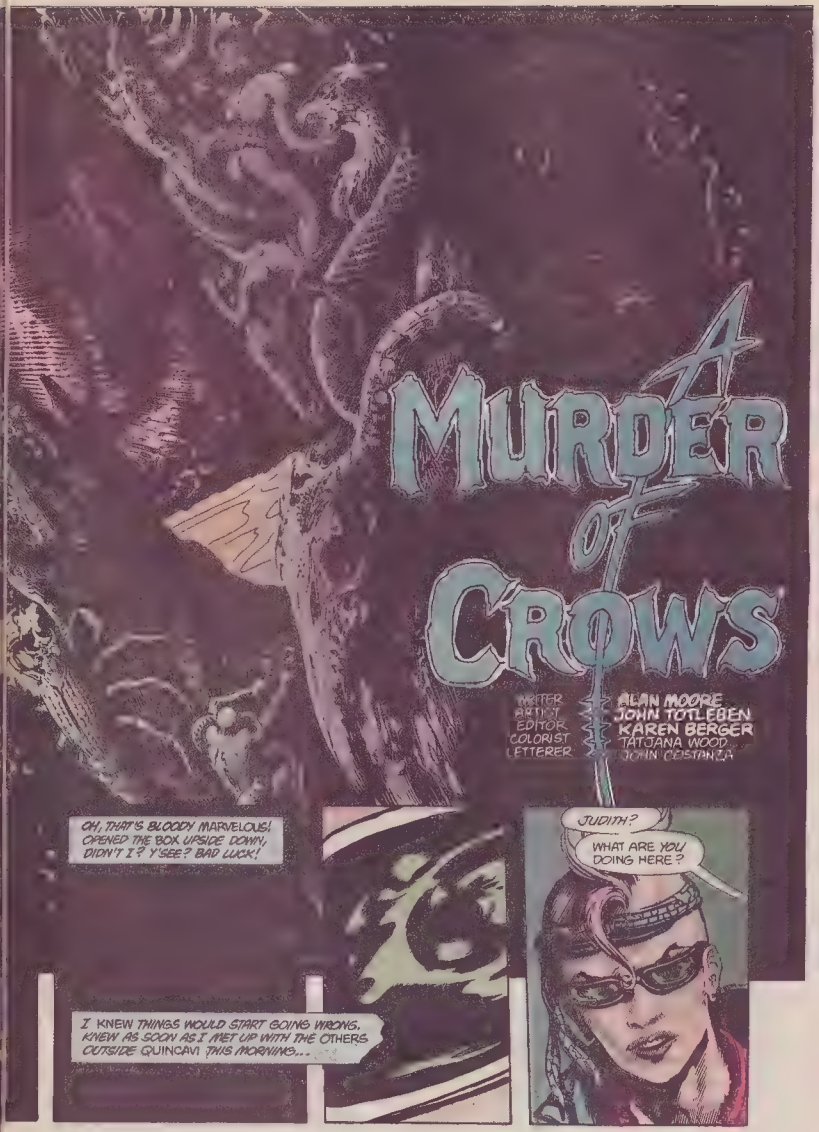
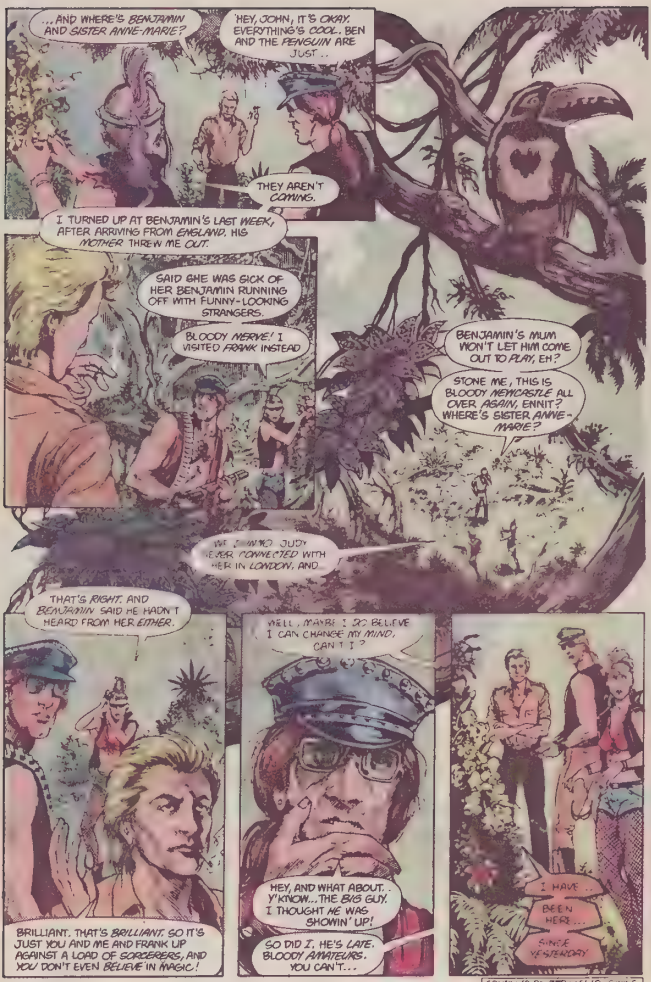
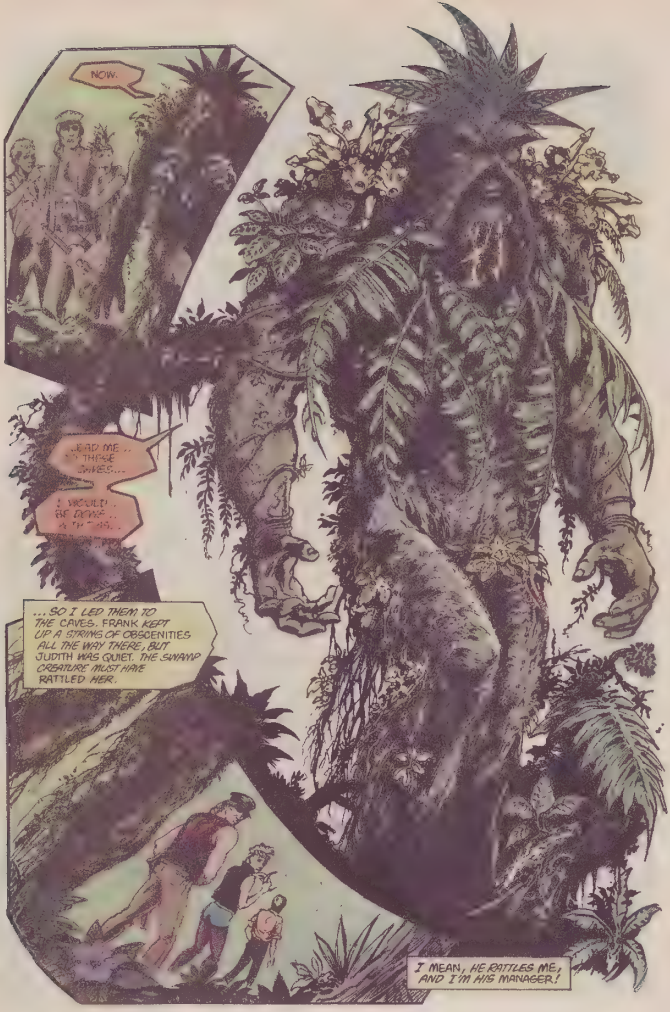
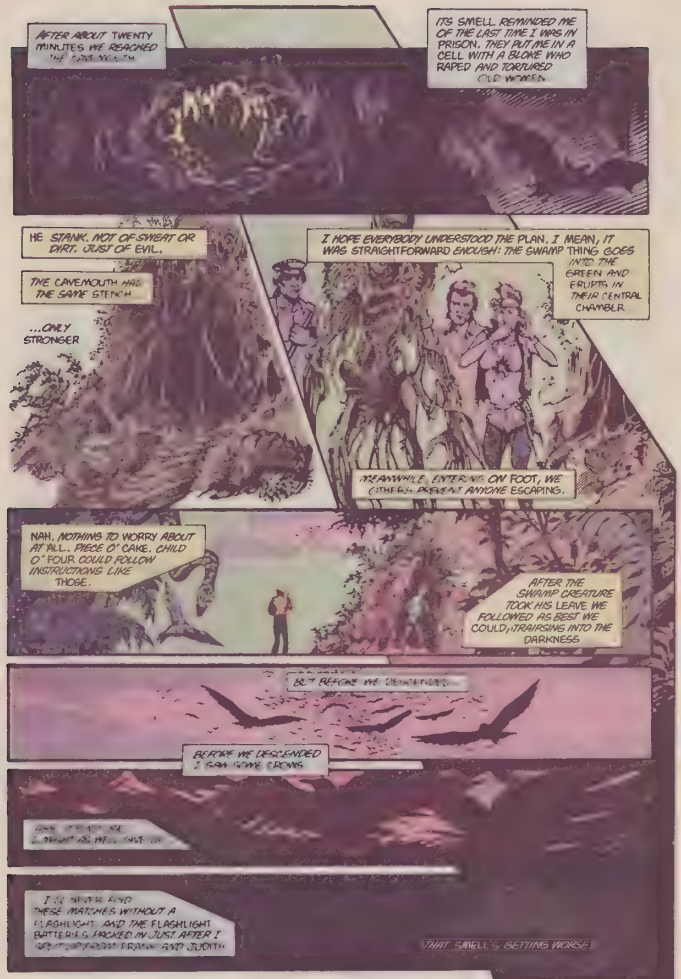
STILL, I SUPPOSE AT LEAST THAT MEANS NOTHING ELSE WILL BE.
SWAMP THING
BLOODY HELL. THESE CARVINGS ARE ANCIENT. THE BRUJERIA MUST HAVE BEEN IN THESE CAVES FOR...
HOW LONG? HUNDREDS OF YEARS? THOUSANDS? ALL THOSE CENTURIES, DOWN HERE IN THE DARK, PLOTTING THE...
AOW!
SOD IT!
LET'S STRIKE ANOTHER. WHERE'S THE BOX... AH! GOOD OLD SWAN VESTAS. BRITISH MATCHES. NEVER LET YOU DOWN. THEY...

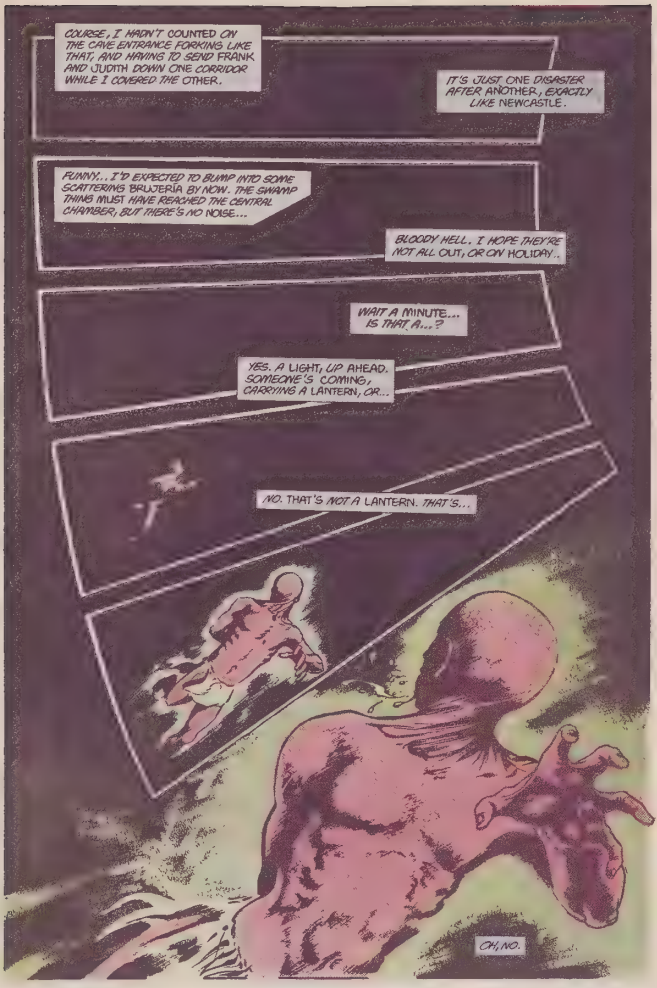

A MURDER OF CROWS
WRITER ALAN MOORE
ARTIST JOHN TOTLEBEN
EDITOR KAREN BERGER
COLORIST TATJANA WOOD
LETTERER JOHN CELARDO
OH, THAT'S BLOODY MARVELOUS! OPENED THE BOX UPSIDE DOWN, DIDN'T I? Y'SEE? BAD LUCK!
I KNEW THINGS WOULD START GOING WRONG. KNEW AS SOON AS I MET UP WITH THE OTHERS OUTSIDE QUINCAVI THIS MORNING...
JUDITH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?


...AND WHERE'S BENJAMIN AND SISTER ANNE-MARIE?
'HEY, JOHN, IT'S OKAY. EVERYTHING'S COOL. BEN AND THE PENGUIN ARE JUST...
THEY AREN'T COMING.
I TURNED UP AT BENJAMIN'S LAST WEEK, AFTER ARRIVING FROM ENGLAND. HIS MOTHER THREW ME OUT.
SAID SHE WAS SICK OF HER BENJAMIN RUNNING OFF WITH FUNNY-LOOKING STRANGERS.
BLOODY NERVE! I VISITED FRANK INSTEAD
BENJAMIN'S MUM WON'T LET HIM COME OUT TO PLAY, EH?
STONE ME, THIS IS BLOODY NEWCASTLE ALL OVER AGAIN, ENNIT? WHERE'S SISTER ANNE-MARIE?
WE NEVER MET JUDY NEVER CONNECTED WITH HER IN LONDON, AND...
THAT'S RIGHT. AND BENJAMIN SAID HE HADN'T HEARD FROM HER EITHER.
BRILLIANT. THAT'S BRILLIANT. SO IT'S JUST YOU AND ME AND FRANK UP AGAINST A LOAD OF SORCERERS, AND YOU DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN MAGIC!
WELL, MAYBE I SO BELIEVE I CAN CHANGE MY MIND, CAN'T I?
HEY, AND WHAT ABOUT, Y'KNOW...THE BIG GUY. I THOUGHT HE WAS SHOWIN' UP!
SO DID I. HE'S LATE. BLOODY AMATEURS. YOU CAN'T...
I HAVE BEEN HERE... SINCE YESTERDAY

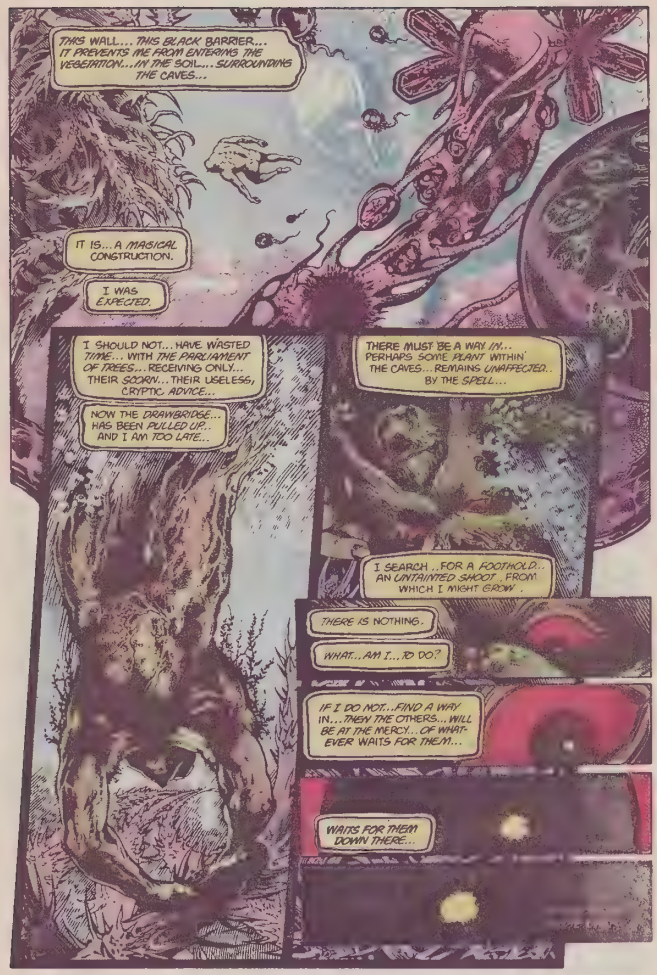
CONTINUED ON 33¢ PAGE FOLLOWING

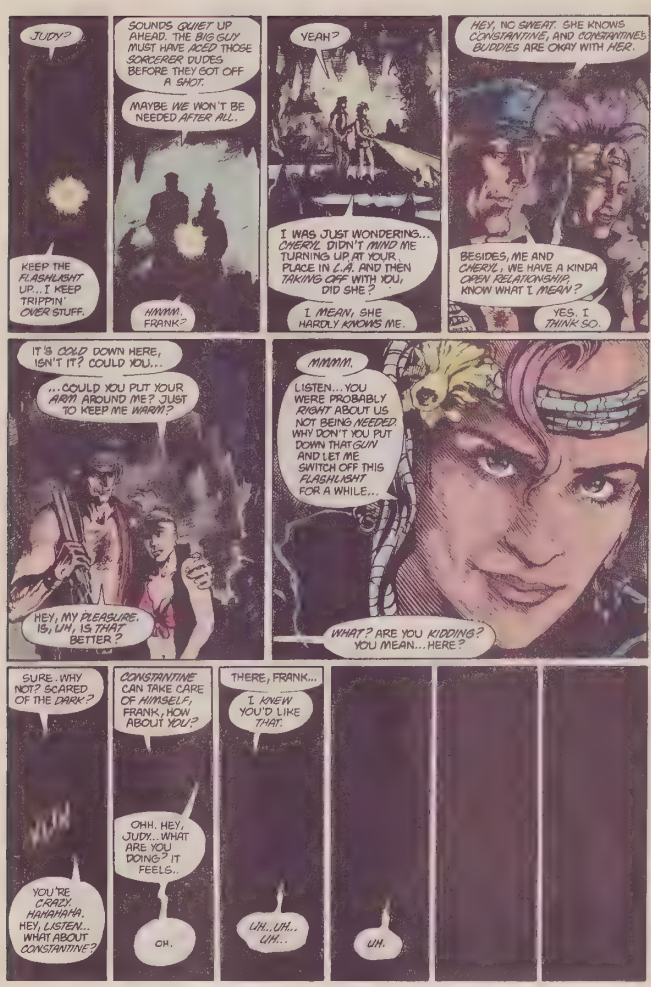

NOW.
...SO I LED THEM TO THE CAVES. FRANK KEPT UP A STRING OF OBSCENITIES ALL THE WAY THERE, BUT JUDITH WAS QUIET. THE SWAMP CREATURE MUST HAVE RATTLED HER.
I MEAN, HE RATTLES ME, AND I'M HIS MANAGER!


AFTER ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES WE REACHED THE ENTRANCE
ITS SMELL REMINDED ME OF THE LAST TIME I WAS IN PRISON. THEY PUT ME IN A CELL WITH A BLOKE WHO RAPED AND TORTURED OLD WOMEN
HE STANK. NOT OF SWEAT OR DIRT. JUST OF EVIL.
THE CAVEMOUTH HAS THE SAME STENCH
...ONLY STRONGER
I HOPE EVERYBODY UNDERSTOOD THE PLAN. I MEAN, IT WAS STRAIGHTFORWARD ENOUGH: THE SWAMP THING GOES INTO THE GREEN AND ERUPTS IN THEIR CENTRAL CHAMBER.
MEANWHILE, ENTERING ON FOOT, WE (EITHER) DISPOSE ANYONE ESCAPING.
NAH. NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT AT ALL. PIECE O' CAKE. CHILD O' FOUR COULD FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS LIKE THOSE.
AFTER THE SWAMP CREATURE TOOK HIS LEAVE WE FOLLOWED AS BEST WE COULD, TRAIPSING INTO THE DARKNESS
BUT BEFORE WE DESCENDED
BEFORE WE DESCENDED I SAW SOME CROWS
I'LL NEVER FIND THESE MATCHES WITHOUT A FLASHLIGHT AND THE FLASHLIGHT BATTERIES PACKED IN JUST AFTER I SPLIT UP FROM FRANK AND JUDITH
THAT SMELL'S GETTING WORSE


COURSE, I HADN'T COUNTED ON THE CAVE ENTRANCE FORKING LIKE THAT, AND HAVING TO SEND FRANK AND JUDITH DOWN ONE CORRIDOR WHILE I COVERED THE OTHER.
IT'S JUST ONE DISASTER AFTER ANOTHER, EXACTLY LIKE NEWCASTLE.
FUNNY... I'D EXPECTED TO BUMP INTO SOME SCATTERING BRUJERÍA BY NOW. THE SWAMP THING MUST HAVE REACHED THE CENTRAL CHAMBER, BUT THERE'S NO NOISE...
BLOODY HELL. I HOPE THEY'RE NOT ALL OUT, OR ON HOLIDAY..
WAIT A MINUTE... IS THAT A...?
YES. A LIGHT, UP AHEAD. SOMEONE'S COMING, CARRYING A LANTERN, OR...
NO. THAT'S NOT A LANTERN. THAT'S...
OH, NO.

AAAAAAAA
SO STRONG...
INVUNCHE...SO STRONG, HADN'T IMAGINED...
LOSING IT, I'M...
NO! MUSTN'T BLACK OUT...BUT THE PAIN...
WHERE...WHERE ARE ALL THE OTHERS...!?
SOMETHING'S
GONE
WRONG..
SOMETHING'S WRONG.
SOMETHING'S WRONG IN THE GREEN.

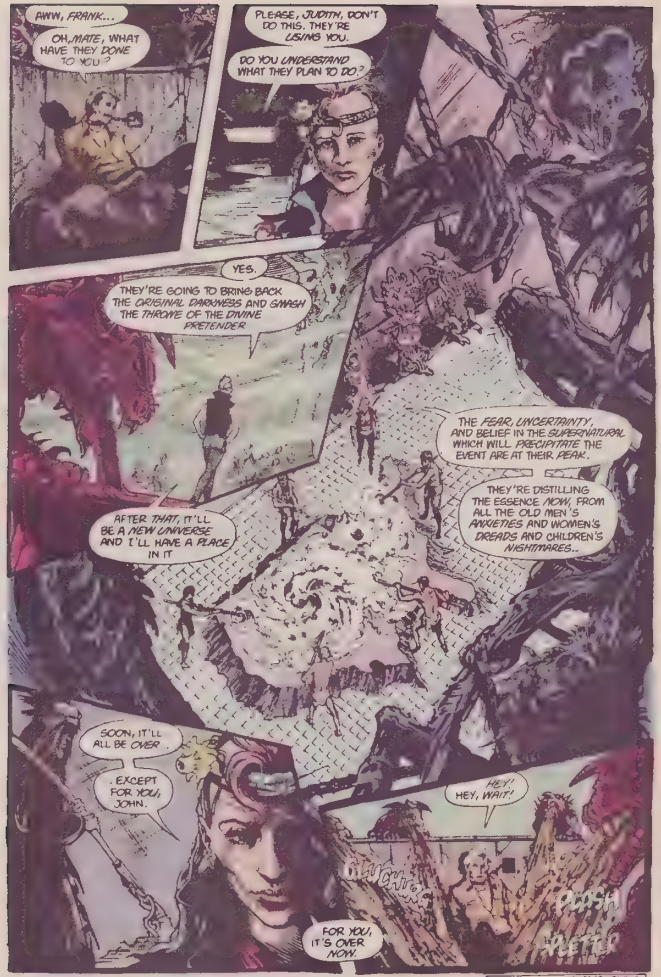

THIS WALL... THIS BLACK BARRIER... IT PREVENTS ME FROM ENTERING THE VEGEATION... IN THE SOIL... SURROUNDING THE CAVES...
IT IS... A MAGICAL CONSTRUCTION.
I WAS EXPECTED.
I SHOULD NOT... HAVE WASTED TIME... WITH THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES... RECEIVING ONLY... THEIR SCORN... THEIR USELESS, CRYPTIC ADVICE...
NOW THE DRAWBRIDGE... HAS BEEN PULLED UP... AND I AM TOO LATE...
THERE MUST BE A WAY IN... PERHAPS SOME PLANT WITHIN THE CAVES... REMAINS UNAFFECTED... BY THE SPELL...
I SEARCH... FOR A FOOTHOLD... AN UNTAINTED SHOOT... FROM WHICH I MIGHT GROW.
THERE IS NOTHING.
WHAT... AM I... TO DO?
IF I DO NOT... FIND A WAY IN... THEN THE OTHERS... WILL BE AT THE MERCY... OF WHAT-EVER WAITS FOR THEM...
WAITS FOR THEM DOWN THERE...


JUDY?
KEEP THE FLASHLIGHT UP... I KEEP TRIPPIN' OVER STUFF.
SOUNDS QUIET UP AHEAD. THE BIG GUY MUST HAVE ACED THOSE SORCERER DUDES BEFORE THEY GOT OFF A SHOT.
MAYBE WE WON'T BE NEEDED AFTER ALL.
HMMM. FRANK?
YEAH?
I WAS JUST WONDERING... CHERYL DIDN'T MIND ME TURNING UP AT YOUR PLACE IN L.A. AND THEN TAKING OFF WITH YOU, DID SHE?
I MEAN, SHE HARDLY KNOWS ME.
HEY, NO SWEAT. SHE KNOWS CONSTANTINE, AND CONSTANTINE'S BUDDIES ARE OKAY WITH HER.
BESIDES, ME AND CHERYL, WE HAVE A KINDA OPEN RELATIONSHIP, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
YES. I THINK SO.
IT'S COLD DOWN HERE, ISN'T IT? COULD YOU...
...COULD YOU PUT YOUR ARM AROUND ME? JUST TO KEEP ME WARM?
HEY, MY PLEASURE. IS, UH, IS THAT BETTER?
MMMM.
LISTEN... YOU WERE PROBABLY RIGHT ABOUT US NOT BEING NEEDED. WHY DON'T YOU PUT DOWN THAT GUN AND LET ME SWITCH OFF THIS FLASHLIGHT FOR A WHILE...
WHAT? ARE YOU KIDDING? YOU MEAN... HERE?
SURE. WHY NOT? SCARED OF THE DARK?
YOU'RE CRAZY. HAHAHAHA. HEY, LISTEN.. WHAT ABOUT CONSTANTINE?
CONSTANTINE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF, FRANK, HOW ABOUT YOU?
OHH. HEY, JUDY.. WHAT ARE YOU DOING? IT FEELS..
OH.
THERE, FRANK...
I KNEW YOU'D LIKE THAT.
UH..UH... UH..
UH.

CONTINUED ON 35th PAGE FOLLOWING

CONSTANTINE
CON-STAN-TINE
MUHH WHERE
WHERE AM I?
YOU ARE AMONGST YOUR ENEMIES.
YOU ARE IN A PLACE OF LONG AND CRUEL DEATH.
THE BRUJERIA WELCOMES YOU, SENOR CONSTANTINE.
CON-STAN-TINE
YOU HAVE MADE THE FOOL WITH US, CONSTANTINE.
WE ARE MILLIONS OF YEARS OLD. BEFORE MAN, WAS THE BRUJERIA. AFTER THE BRUJERIA, NOTHING.
YOU HAVE NOT RESPECTED US. NOW FOR YOU IS ONLY HORROR. LEE.
THE CREATURE THAT YOU WALK WITH HAS FAILED YOU. NOTHING GROWS HERE TO LEND HIM FORM. OUR POWER, STRONGER THAN HIS, BARS HIS WAY
OH, YEAH? WELL, LISTEN, MATE, YOU'RE FINISHED! SEE, I'M NOT ALONE...
I'M SORRY, JOHN
... BUT YES, YOU ARE

JUDITH? WHAT ARE YOU...
OH,NO.
YOU HAVEN'T
I HAD TO, JOHN. THE INVUNCHE CAUGHT UP WITH ME IN LONDON. THEY GAVE ME A STRAIGHT CHOICE BETWEEN JOINING THEM AND..
...AND WHAT HAPPENED TO EMMA.
THEY'RE COMMING YOU, STUPID! THE BRUJERIA'S ALL MALE. WOMEN CAN'T JOIN!
NOT AS A FULL MEMBER, NO. BUT CHOSEN WOMEN ARE ALLOWED TO JOIN AS VOLADORAS... SPECIAL FEMALE MESSENGERS.
THEY SAY I'LL HAVE THE POWER TO TURN INTO A BIRD, JOHN. THEY'RE ENTRUSTING ME WITH A SACRED MISSION.
WELL, THAT MUST BE VERY NICE FOR YOU.
THE INVUNCHE GOT THE MUM IN LONDON, WHEN SHE CAME LOOKING FOR ME.
I KILLED COX AND HIS MOTHER MYSELF, WHEN I VISITED THEM. SHE DIDN'T THROW ME OUT AT ALL.
AS FOR FRANK..
HERE..
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHERS? TO BENJAMIN AND SISTER ANNE-MARIE?
AND WHERE'S FRANK?


AWW, FRANK...
OH, MATE, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?
PLEASE, JUDITH, DON'T DO THIS. THEY'RE USING YOU.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO?
YES.
THEY'RE GOING TO BRING BACK THE ORIGINAL DARKNESS AND SMASH THE THRONE OF THE DIVINE PRETENDER
THE FEAR, UNCERTAINTY, AND BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL WHICH WILL PRECIPITATE THE EVENT ARE AT THEIR PEAK.
THEY'RE DISTILLING THE ESSENCE NOW, FROM ALL THE OLD MEN'S ANXIETIES AND WOMEN'S DREADS AND CHILDREN'S NIGHTMARES..
AFTER THAT, IT'LL BE A NEW UNIVERSE AND I'LL HAVE A PLACE IN IT
SOON, IT'LL ALL BE OVER.
. EXCEPT FOR YOU, JOHN.
HEY! HEY, WAIT!
FOR YOU, IT'S OVER NOW!
SPLOSH
SPLETCH

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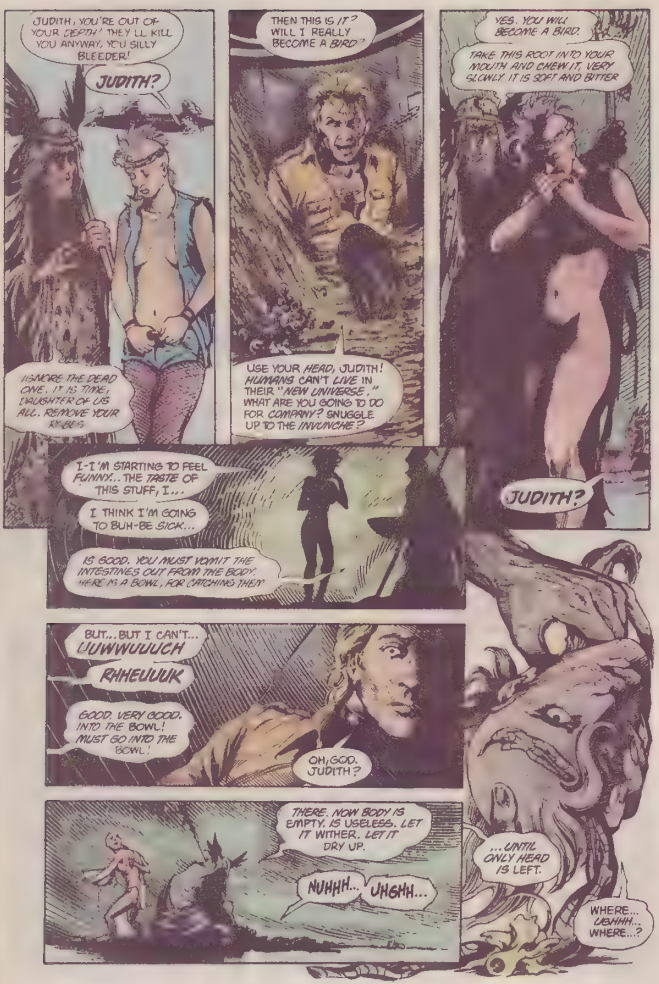
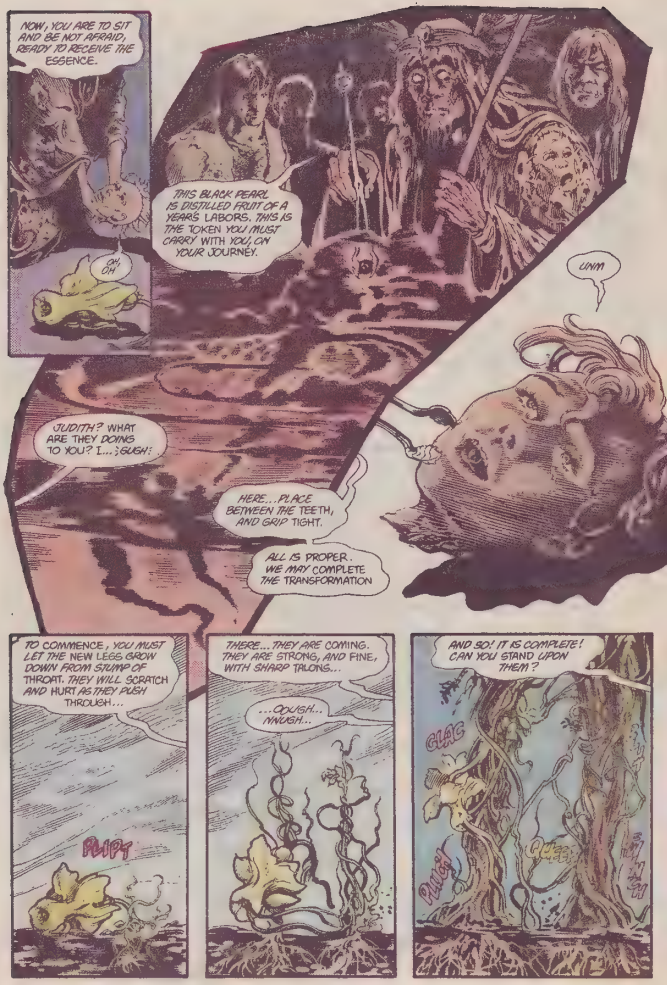

JUDITH, YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR SKEITH! THEY'LL KILL YOU ANYWAY, YOU SILLY BLEEDER!
JUDITH?
IISMORE THE DEAD ONE. IT IS TIME, DAUGHTER OF IIS ALL. REMOVE YOUR KNEES.
THEN THIS IS IT? WILL I REALLY BECOME A BIRD?
USE YOUR HEAD, JUDITH! HUMANS CAN'T LIVE IN THEIR "NEW UNIVERSE." WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO FOR COMPANY? SNUGGLE UP TO THE INVINCHE?
YES. YOU WILL BECOME A BIRD.
TAKE THIS ROOT INTO YOUR MOUTH AND CHEW IT. VERY SLOWLY. IT IS SOFT AND BITTER.
JUDITH?
I-I'M STARTING TO FEEL FUNNY... THE TASTE OF THIS STUFF, I...
I THINK I'M GOING TO BUH-BE SICK...
IS GOOD. YOU MUST VOMIT THE INTESTINES OUT FROM THE BODY. HERE IS A BOWL, FOR CATCHING THEM.
BUT... BUT I CAN'T... UUWWUUUCH
RAHEUUUK
GOOD. VERY GOOD. INTO THE BOWL! MUST GO INTO THE BOWL!
OH, GOD. JUDITH?
THERE. NOW BODY IS EMPTY. IS USELESS. LET IT WITHER. LET IT DRY UP.
NUHHH... UHGHH...
...UNTIL ONLY HEAD IS LEFT.
WHERE... UGHHH... WHERE...?



NOW, YOU ARE TO SIT AND BE NOT AFRAID, READY TO RECEIVE THE ESSENCE.

OH, OH

THIS BLACK PEARL IS DISTILLED FRUIT OF A YEAR'S LABORS. THIS IS THE TOKEN YOU MUST CARRY WITH YOU, ON YOUR JOURNEY.

UNM

JUDITH? WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO YOU? I... ;GUGH:

HERE... PLACE BETWEEN THE TEETH, AND GRIP TIGHT.

ALL IS PROPER. WE MAY COMPLETE THE TRANSFORMATION

TO COMMENCE, YOU MUST LET THE NEW LEGS GROW DOWN FROM STUMP OF THROAT. THEY WILL SCRATCH AND HURT AS THEY PUSH THROUGH...

PLIPT

THERE... THEY ARE COMING. THEY ARE STRONG, AND FINE, WITH SHARP TALONS...

...OOUGH... NNUGH...

AND SO! IT IS COMPLETE! CAN YOU STAND UPON THEM?

GLAC

PLUG!

QUEEP

NO? VERY WELL FOR CORRECTING THE BALANCE, YOU MUST GROW TAIL, PEELING DOWN FROM BACK OF NECK...
NNNGH! NNUGHH!
WHAT TROUBLES YOU? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO...
.. SAY?
WE ARE BREACHED
INVUNCHE!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

COME... WE MUST HURRY NOW.
YOUR TAIL IS ALMOST FORMED. NEXT IS THE BEAK.
I PUSH YOUR EYES BACK TO THE SIDES OF YOUR HEAD, LIKE SO, GIVING YOU THE BIRD-SIGHT.
NOW LET YOUR NOSE MELT, FUSING WITH MOUTH AND JAW...
SCRUNCH
WHAT'S HAPPENING? SOMEBODY STOP THE TRANSFORMATION!
DON'T BOTHER WITH THE REST OF THE FILTH, YOU GREAT PILLOCK...; BUGGH!...
STOP THE GRAND MASTER. DON'T LET HIM ; GLUHH ; CHANGE HER INTO A BIRD, OR WE'RE...
BLUP BLEWN
YOUR FEATHERS FORM. FEEL THEM BUD FORTH FROM BROW, FROM CHEEK...
ULAAK... GAK...

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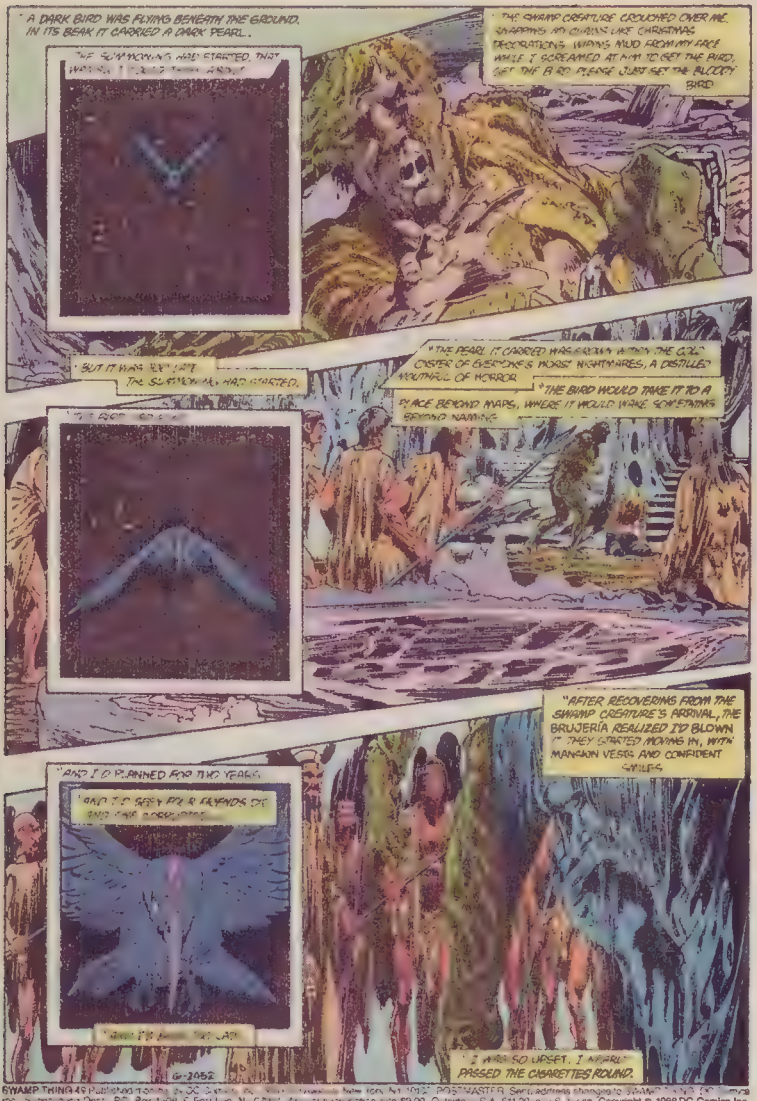
NOW THE WINGS. MAKE THEM UNFOLD, FROM YOUR EARS...
STRETCHING... CURLING OUTWARDS...
BE CAREFUL NOT TO DROP THE ESSENCE FROM YOUR BEAK
ONLY A FEW MOMENTS NOW... THE PIN FEATHERS MUST DRY..
THERE.
IT IS DONE.
THE IDIOT.
THE BIG, STUPID IDIOT
HE SAVED ME..
HE LET THEM CHANGE JUDITH AND SAVED ME
NOW THE BIRD'S FLOWN..
.. AND THE MESSAGE IS ON ITS WAY...
...AND THE BAD LUCK WILL TAKE US ALL.
EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US..
ALL ON A ONE-WAY LOSING STREAK.
HI.

SORRY I'M LATE. MY ALARM DIDN'T GO OFF. EITHER THAT OR I SLEPT THROUGH IT.
HI, TIM. Y'SEE HILL STREET LAST NIGHT?
UH, HI, ABBY NO. NO, I DIDN'T.
IT WAS PRETTY GOOD, EXCEPT I'M GETTING SICK OF THAT BIT AT THE END, WHERE THEY'RE IN BED. IT'S SO...
ABBY? UH... LISTEN.. HAVE YOU SEEN A COPY OF THE COURIER TODAY?
NAH. I GET THE DAYLINE. WHY
WELL... UH. MAYBE YOU OUGHTA TAKE A LOOK.
The Cou
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST?
BEAUTIFUL CHILD
MINDER'S MONSTER
LOVE GAMES
THIS BIGFOOT ALIVE
UH... I, UH...
OH, JESUS.
ABBY? CAN YOU COME THROUGH INTO MY OFFICE A MOMENT?
D-DEANNA? LOOK, I... MAYBE I OUGHTA EXPLAIN..
IT'S TOO LATE TO EXPLAIN TO ME, ABBY. EXPLAIN TO THESE PEOPLE.
DEANNA FRENCH
MRS. CABLE? I'M OFFICER MADDEN. THIS IS OFFICER LONG. I'M AFRAID WE HAVE TO ASK YOU TO COME WITH US.

DEANNA? WHAT.. WHAT IS THIS? IS THIS A JOKE?
I WISH TO GOD IT WERE.
NOW, I HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT, BUT THAT ANYTHING YOU DO SAY...
...MAY BE TAKEN DOWN AND USED IN EVIDENCE AGAINST YOU.
OKAY, SISTER, OUTSIDE AND IN THE WAGON.
WAIT... WHAT AM I BEING CHARGED WITH? I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING..
HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING? LADY, YOU'RE A SEX OFFENDER, YOU WORK WITH KIDS, AND YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING?
LISTEN, I'VE KNOWN GUYS WHO DO IT WITH ANIMALS AND LAUNDRY, BUT YOU... YOU MAKE ME SICK.
EASY, PEGGY..
L-LISTEN, YOU CAN'T PROVE THESE PICTURES ARE GENUINE. YOU...
THIS PAST YEAR WE'VE HAD REPORTS ALL OVER THE STATE DESCRIBING THAT THING IN THE PICTURE. COURIER THINKS IT'S A GUY INNA SUIT.
WE DON'T.
Y'SEE, YOU, LADY, YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE. YOU BEEN OUT IN THE SWAMPS SHACKIN' UP WITH SOMETHIN' THAT AIN'T EVEN HUMAN!
PROBABLY BEEN DOIN' IT FOR MONTHS, NICE AND SECRET..
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST?
..BUT YOU GOT UNLUCKY ONE TIME. SOMEBODY WAS AROUND WITH A CAMERA...
...AND NOW WE GOT THE WHOLE STORY IN BLACK AND WHITE. ALTHOUGH FROM WHERE I'M STANDIN'..
...IT'S MOSTLY BLACK.
THE SUMMONING!

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
49
75¢
CAN 95¢
U.K. 40p
JUNE 86
SWAMP THING
BY
ALAN MOORE
STAN WOCH &
ALFREDO ALCALA
WHO are the LORDS OF THE ULTRA REALM?


" A DARK BIRD WAS FLYING BENEATH THE GROUND. IN ITS BEAK IT CARRIED A DARK PEARL..
" THE SWAMP CREATURE CROUCHED OVER ME, SNAPPING ITS CLAWS LIKE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS. WIPING MUD FROM MY FACE WHILE I SCREAMED AT HIM TO GET THE BIRD, GET THE B RD. PLEASE JUST GET THE BLOODY BIRD
" BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. THE SUMMONING HAD STARTED.
" THE PEARL IT CARRIED WAS BROWN WITHIN THE COLD CENTER OF EVERYONE'S WORST NIGHTMARES, A DISTILLED MOUTHFUL OF HORROR.
" THE BIRD WOULD TAKE IT TO A PLACE BEYOND MAPS, WHERE IT WOULD WAKE SOMETHING BEYOND NAMING.
" AND I'D PLANNED FOR TWO YEARS.
" AND I'D SEEN IT IN FRIENDS OF MINE AND THEIR CORRUPTORS.
" I WAS SO UPSET, I MEAN, I PASSED THE CIGARETTES ROUND.
"AFTER RECOVERING FROM THE SWAMP CREATURE'S ARRIVAL, THE BRUJERÍA REALIZED IT'D BLOWN IT. THEY STARTED MOVING IN, WITH MANCHON VESS AND CONFIDENT SMILES.

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CONSTANTINE! GET OUT... OF THE CAVES..

WHAT'S THE POINT? WE SCREWED UP. MIGHT AS WELL FINISH IT HERE THAN STICK AROUND FOR WHAT'S COMING NEXT.

I...

SAID GO!

UNGHH

THE ENGLISHMAN SPOKE TRULY, CREATURE. NO POINT RUNNING. NO POINT FIGHTING. NOT EVEN YOU.

OUR POWER IS STRONG HERE.

FOOLS. YOU ARE IN A CAVE BENEATH THE CLEAN EARTH

...IN THE CENTER OF A RAINFOREST..

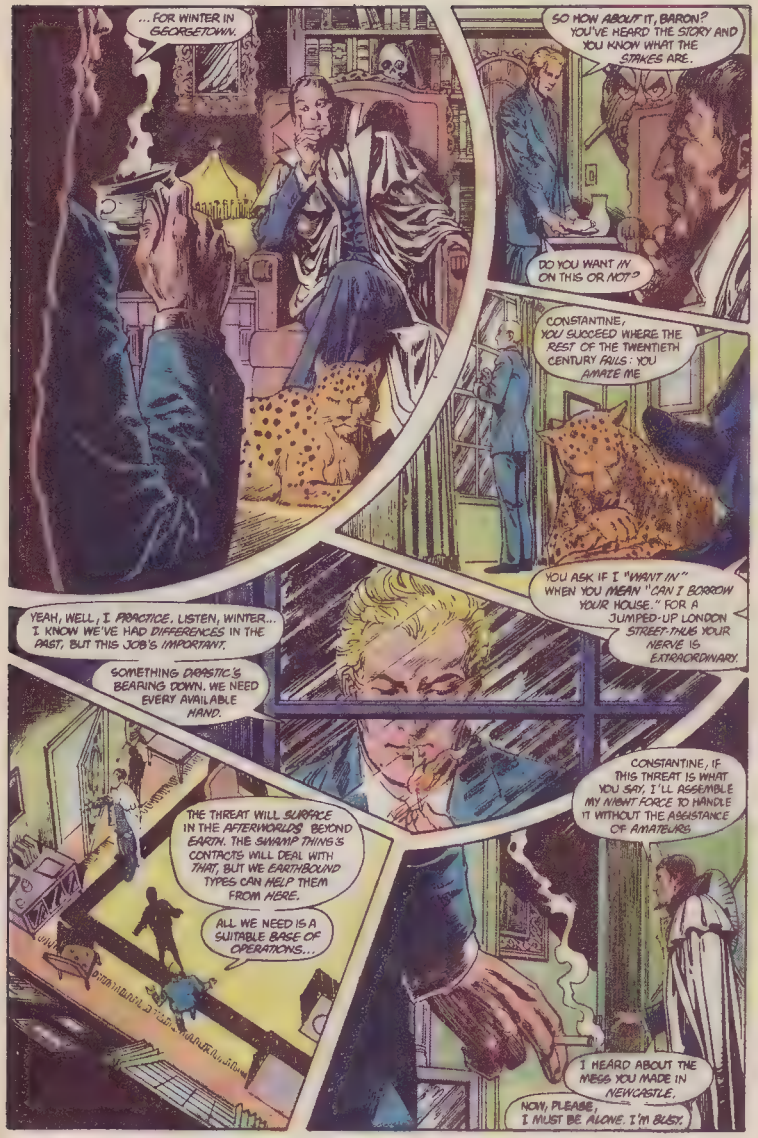
YOU DO NOT EVEN HAVE A CHANCE.

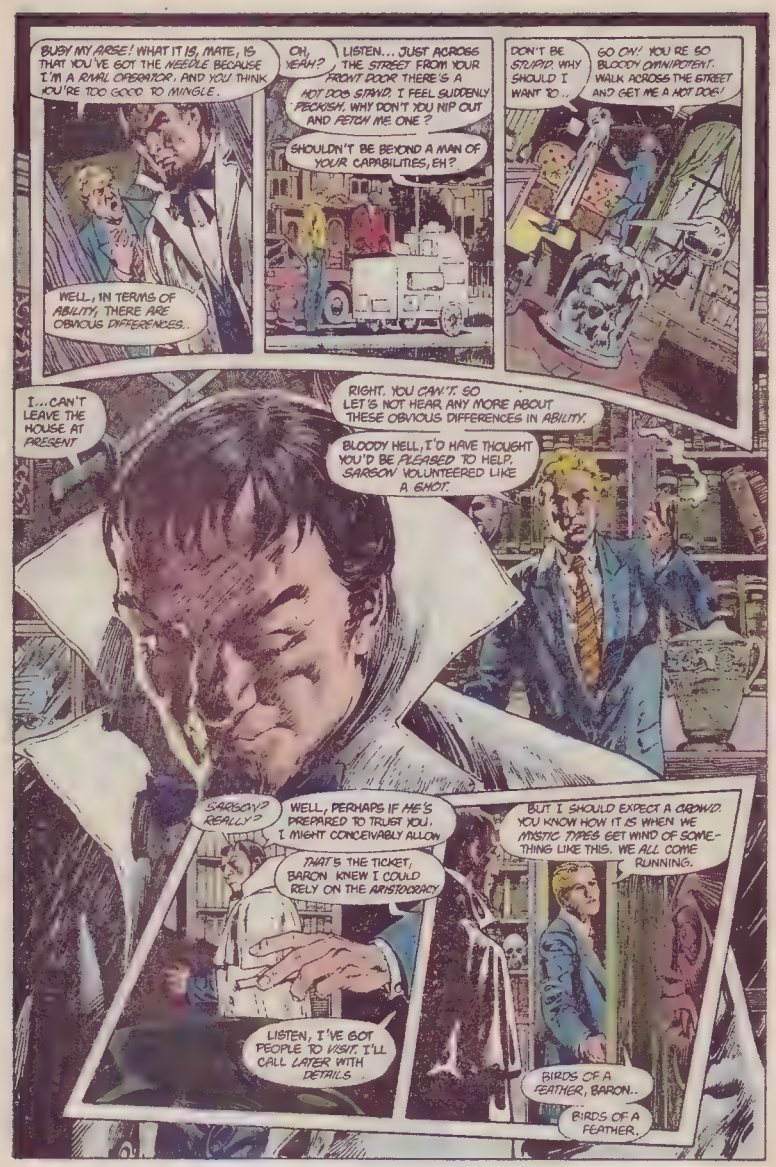
THE SUMMONING

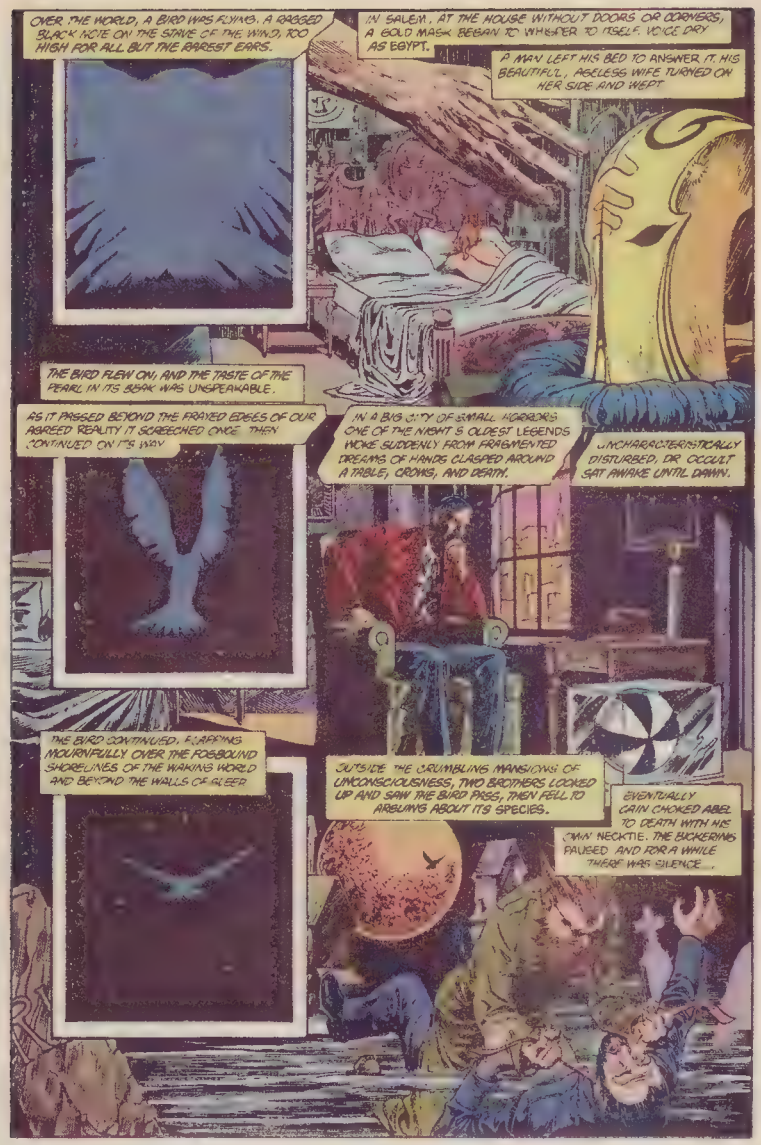
ALAN MOORE. WRITER · STAN WOCH & ALFREDO ALCALA. ARTISTS · KAREN BERGER. EDITOR

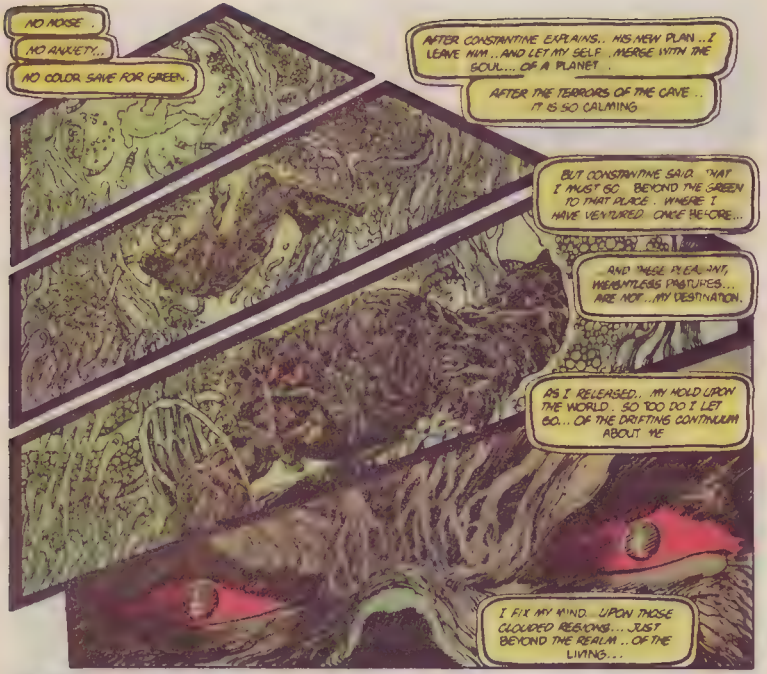
TATJANA WOOD, colorist · JOHN COSTANZA, letterer

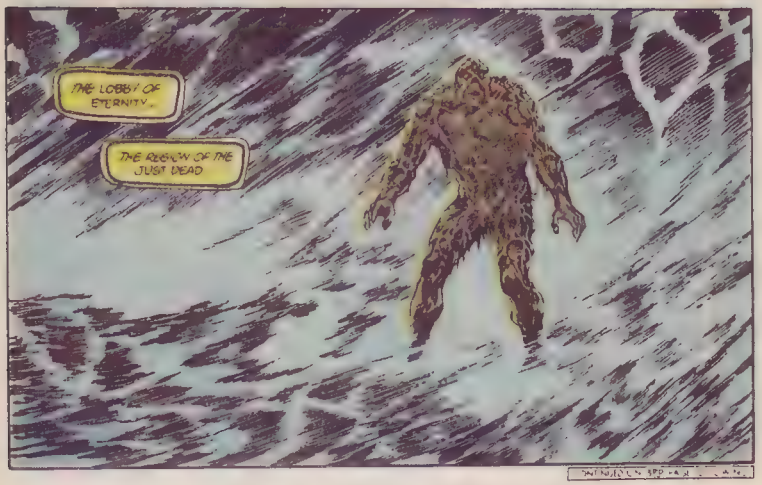
I REMEMBERED WHAT I HAD BEEN LIKE UNDER THE MUD AND KEPT MOVING
TUNNEL, SURGING ALONG ROCK ARTERIES FROM THE FLOODED CHAMBER AT THE CAVE SYSTEM'S HEART
"THE SCREAMS HAD STOPPED. I REACHED DAYLIGHT SECONDS AHEAD OF THE GUSHING EARTH.
"I SAT IN THE PATAGONIAN SUNLIGHT, COUGHING AND SHAKING AND WISHING THE MUD HADN'T RUINED MY LAST PACKET OF SILK CUT CIGARETTES
AFTER A WHILE, THE SWAMP THING JOINED ME
WE DISCUSSED THE SITUATION. IN BETWEEN MY SPLUTTERING AND THE CREATURE'S NORMAL TALKING SPEED IT TOOK A LONG TIME
THE BIRD HAD FLOWN, GONE TO WAKE A POWER THAT CHOOSE LEVEL HEAVEN. WE COULDN'T ALTER THAT
BUT IF WE COULDN'T STOP THE ENTITY COMING BACK AT LEAST WE COULD BE READY FOR IT WHEN IT ARRIVED...
"THIS WAS MY CONTINGENCY PLAN, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY WE'D NEED HELP. WE'D ALSO HAVE TO SPLIT UP"
I SUGGESTED HE GET IN TOUCH WITH HIS CONTACTS AND ASK FOR ASSISTANCE WHILE I DID THE SAME WITH MINE
THEN WE SEPARATED, LITERALLY IN HIS CAGE, AND I GAVE UP THE PERPETUAL SOUTH AMERICAN SUMMER...


...FOR WINTER IN GEORGETOWN.
SO HOW ABOUT IT, BARON? YOU'VE HEARD THE STORY AND YOU KNOW WHAT THE STAKES ARE.
DO YOU WANT IN ON THIS OR NOT?
CONSTANTINE, YOU SUCCEED WHERE THE REST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY FAILS: YOU AMAZE ME
YOU ASK IF I "WANT IN" WHEN YOU MEAN "CAN I BORROW YOUR HOUSE." FOR A JUMPED-UP LONDON STREET-THUG YOUR NERVE IS EXTRAORDINARY.
YEAH, WELL, I PRACTICE. LISTEN, WINTER... I KNOW WE'VE HAD DIFFERENCES IN THE PAST, BUT THIS JOB'S IMPORTANT.
SOMETHING DRASTIC'S BEARING DOWN. WE NEED EVERY AVAILABLE HAND.
CONSTANTINE, IF THIS THREAT IS WHAT YOU SAY, I'LL ASSEMBLE MY NIGHT FORCE TO HANDLE IT WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF AMATEURS.
THE THREAT WILL SURFACE IN THE AFTERWORLDS BEYOND EARTH. THE SWAMP THING'S CONTACTS WILL DEAL WITH THAT, BUT WE EARTHBOUND TYPES CAN HELP THEM FROM HERE.
ALL WE NEED IS A SUITABLE BASE OF OPERATIONS...
I HEARD ABOUT THE MESS YOU MADE IN NEWCASTLE.
NOW, PLEASE, I MUST BE ALONE. I'M BUSY.


BUSY MY ARSE! WHAT IT IS, MATE, IS THAT YOU'VE GOT THE NEEDLE BECAUSE I'M A RIVAL CASSATOR, AND YOU THINK YOU'RE TOO GOOD TO MINGLE.
WELL, IN TERMS OF ABILITY, THERE ARE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES..
OH, YEAH?
LISTEN... JUST ACROSS THE STREET FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR THERE'S A HOT DOG STAND. I FEEL SUDDENLY PECKISH. WHY DON'T YOU NIP OUT AND FETCH ME ONE?
SHOULDN'T BE BEYOND A MAN OF YOUR CAPABILITIES, EH?
DON'T BE STUPID. WHY SHOULD I WANT TO..
GO ON! YOU'RE SO BLOODY OMNIPOTENT. WALK ACROSS THE STREET AND GET ME A HOT DOG!
I...CAN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE AT PRESENT.
RIGHT. YOU CAN'T. SO LET'S NOT HEAR ANY MORE ABOUT THESE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES IN ABILITY.
BLOODY HELL, I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D BE PLEASED TO HELP. SARSON VOLUNTEERED LIKE A SHOT.
SARSON? REALLY?
WELL, PERHAPS IF HE'S PREPARED TO TRUST YOU, I MIGHT CONCEIVABLY ALLOW
THAT'S THE TICKET, BARON. KNEW I COULD RELY ON THE ARISTOCRACY
LISTEN, I'VE GOT PEOPLE TO VISIT. I'LL CALL LATER WITH DETAILS.
BUT I SHOULD EXPECT A CROWD. YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WHEN WE MYSTIC TYPES GET WIND OF SOME-THING LIKE THIS. WE ALL COME RUNNING.
BIRDS OF A FEATHER, BARON..
BIRDS OF A FEATHER.


OVER THE WORLD, A BIRD WAS FLYING. A RAGGED BLACK NOTE ON THE STAVE OF THE WIND, TOO HIGH FOR ALL BUT THE RAREST EARS.
IN SALEM, AT THE HOUSE WITHOUT DOORS OR CORNERS, A GOLD MASK BEGAN TO WHEEZE TO ITSELF. VOICE DRY AS EGYPT.
A MAN LEFT HIS BED TO ANSWER IT. HIS BEAUTIFUL, AGELESS WIFE TURNED ON HER SIDE AND WEPT.
THE BIRD FLEW ON, AND THE TASTE OF THE PEARL IN ITS BEAK WAS UNSPEAKABLE.
AS IT PASSED BEYOND THE FRAYED EDGES OF OUR AGREED REALITY IT SCREECHED ONCE. THEN CONTINUED ON IT'S WAY.
IN A BIG CITY OF SMALL HORRORS ONE OF THE NIGHT'S OLDEST LEGENDS WOKE SUDDENLY FROM FRAGMENTED DREAMS OF HANDS CLASPED AROUND A TABLE, CROWS, AND DEATH.
UNCHARACTERISTICALLY DISTURBED, DR OCCULT SAT AWAKE UNTIL DAWN.
THE BIRD CONTINUED, FLAPPING MOURNFULLY OVER THE FOGBOUND SHORELINES OF THE WAKING WORLD AND BEYOND THE WALLS OF SLEEP.
OUTSIDE THE CRUMBLING MANSIONS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS, TWO BROTHERS LOOKED UP AND SAW THE BIRD PASS, THEN FELL TO ARGUING ABOUT IT'S SPECIES.
EVENTUALLY CAIN CHOKED ABEL TO DEATH WITH HIS OWN NECKTIE. THE BICKERING PAUSED AND FOR A WHILE THERE WAS SILENCE...





NO NOISE.

NO ANXIETY...

NO COLOR SAVE FOR GREEN.

AFTER CONSTANTINE EXPLAINS.. HIS NEW PLAN ..I LEAVE HIM ..AND LET MY SELF .MERGE WITH THE SOUL... OF A PLANET .

AFTER THE TERRORS OF THE CAVE .. IT IS SO CALMING

BUT CONSTANTINE SAID. THAT I MUST GO BEYOND THE GREEN TO THAT PLACE . WHERE I HAVE VENTURED ONCE BEFORE...

AND THESE PLEASANT, WEIGHTLESS PASTURES... ARE NOT ..MY DESTINATION.

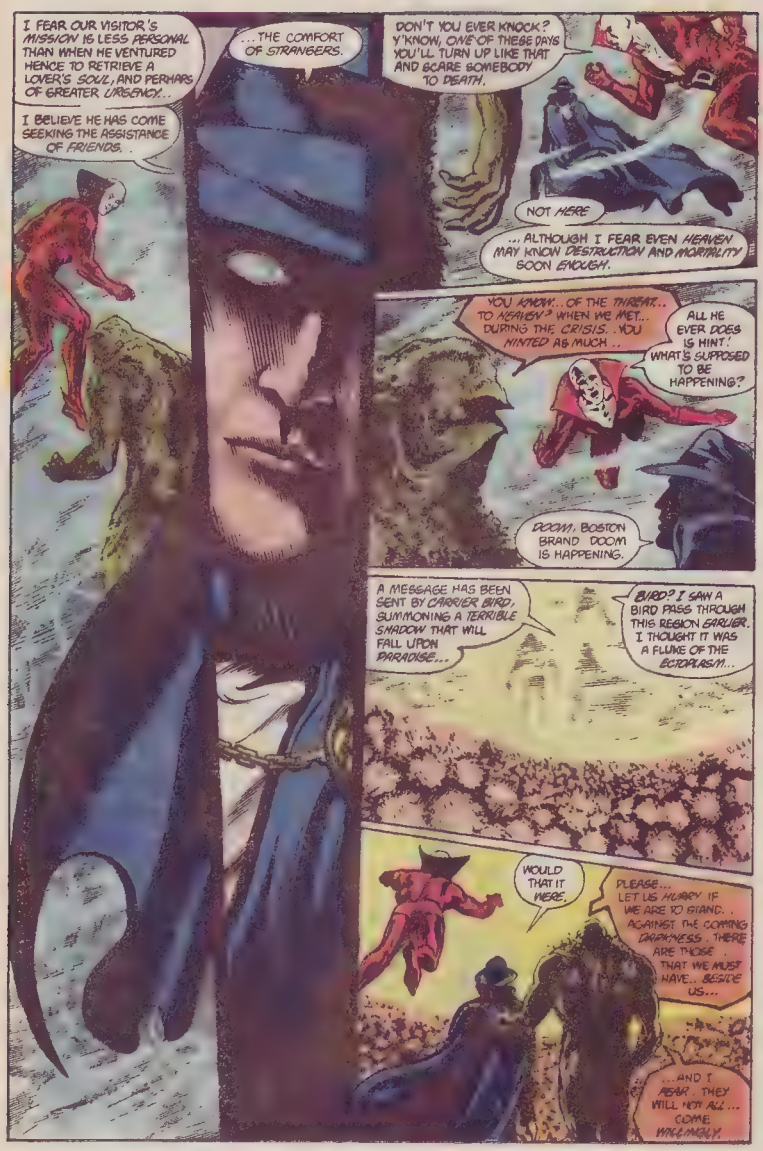
AS I RELEASED.. MY HOLD UPON THE WORLD . SO TOO DO I LET GO... OF THE DRIFTING CONTINUUM ABOUT ME

I FIX MY MIND. UPON THOSE CLOUDED REGIONS... JUST BEYOND THE REALM ..OF THE LIVING...

THE LOBBY OF ETERNITY.

THE REGION OF THE JUST DEAD

LISTEN, THIS IS A BIG ENOUGH SCREW UP ALREADY. DON'T MAKE IT HARD ON BOTH OF US
THEY'VE GIVEN YOU A CARDIAC MASSAGE. THEY'RE REVIVING YOU. YOU'LL HAVE TO GO BACK!
NO WAY JOSÉ
LISTEN, MY LIFE WAS LOUSY. I OWED THE INTERNAL REVENUE, MY MARRIAGE WAS A MESS, AND I HATED MY KIDS
I AIN'T GOIN' BACK. I HAVE A RIGHT TO BE DEAD!
BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK. I LIKE IT HERE!
OH, HI. LISTEN, CAN YOU TALK TO THIS GUY?
UHH
H-HEY. WHAT'S THIS? THIS IS SOME SORTA DEMON, RIGHT? THE KIND THAT TAKES PEOPLE DOWN TO, UH...
HEY, LISTEN, Y'KNOW, MAYBE I MIGHT RECONSIDER. THEY GAVE ME A CARDIAC MASSAGE, YOU SAY?
THAT'S RIGHT
WELL... M-MAYBE I OUGHTA GO BACK. Y'KNOW... TO THANK THEM PROPERLY.
Y-YOU GUYS TAKE CARE, NOW
SURE. SEE YOU LATER
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
DON'T ASK ANOTHER CARDIAC MASSAGE... THEY REALLY MAKE A MESS OUT OF THE SCHEDULES UP HERE
SO ANYWAY, WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THESE PARTS? YOU DIDN'T MISPLACE YOUR OLD LADY AGAIN?

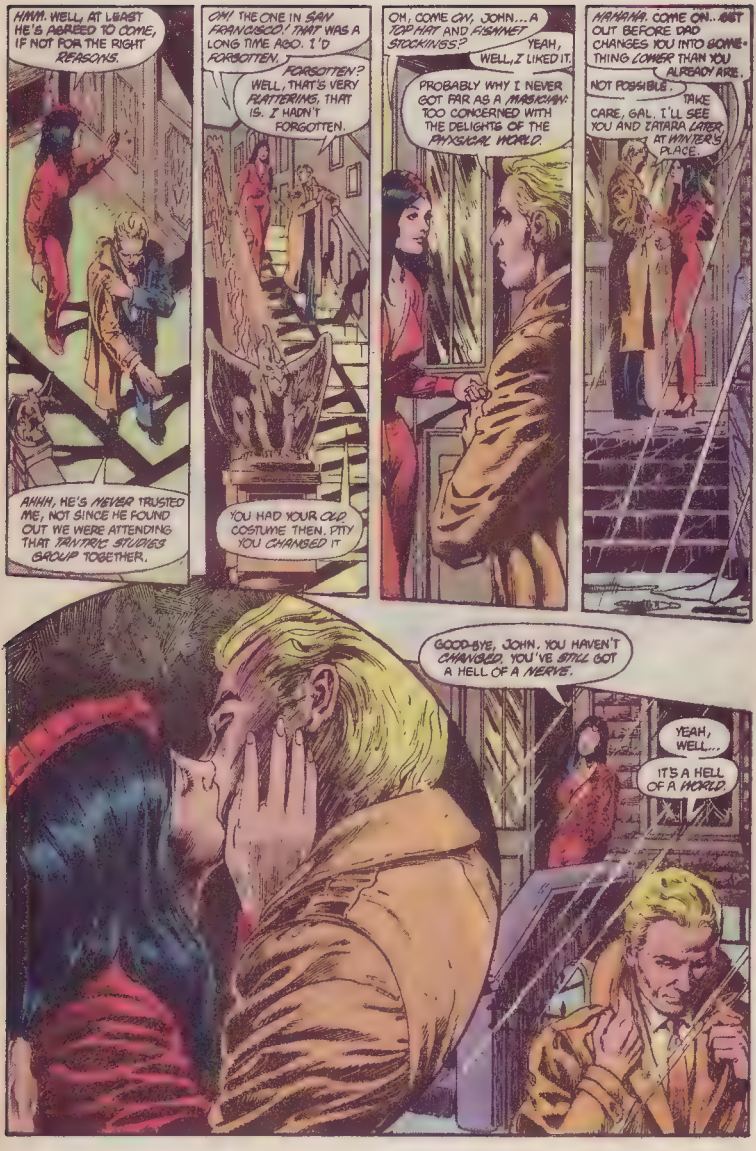

I FEAR OUR VISITOR'S MISSION IS LESS PERSONAL THAN WHEN HE VENTURED HENCE TO RETRIEVE A LOVER'S SOUL, AND PERHAPS OF GREATER URGENCY...
I BELIEVE HE HAS COME SEEKING THE ASSISTANCE OF FRIENDS.
...THE COMFORT OF STRANGERS.
DON'T YOU EVER KNOCK? Y'KNOW, ONE OF THESE DAYS YOU'LL TURN UP LIKE THAT AND SCARE SOMEBODY TO DEATH.
NOT HERE
...ALTHOUGH I FEAR EVEN HEAVEN MAY KNOW DESTRUCTION AND MORTALITY SOON ENOUGH.
YOU KNOW...OF THE THREAT... TO HEAVEN? WHEN WE MET... DURING THE CRISIS. YOU HINTED AS MUCH..
ALL HE EVER DOES IS HINT! WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE HAPPENING?
DOOM. BOSTON BRAND DOOM IS HAPPENING.
A MESSAGE HAS BEEN SENT BY CARRIER BIRD, SUMMONING A TERRIBLE SHADOW THAT WILL FALL UPON PARADISE...
BIRD? I SAW A BIRD PASS THROUGH THIS REGION EARLIER. I THOUGHT IT WAS A FLUKE OF THE ECTOPLASM...
WOULD THAT IT WERE.
PLEASE... LET US HURRY IF WE ARE TO STAND.. AGAINST THE COMING DARKNESS. THERE ARE THOSE THAT WE MUST HAVE... BESIDE US...
...AND I FEAR.. THEY WILL NOT ALL... COME.
WELL-MADLY.

WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU?
DURING THE CRISIS, I STOOD BEFORE THE DAWN OF TIME TO AID HUMANITY.
HAVEN'T I DONE ENOUGH?
HIERONYMOUS BOSCH
SIR, WE NEED YOU. YOU'VE NOTICED HOW THE PSYCHIC ATMOSPHERE'S CHANGED THIS LAST YEAR .. OUTBREAKS OF LYCANTHROPY, VAMPIRISM, REANIMATION.. YOU MAYME IT!
THE BRUJERIA DID THAT, AS A PRELUDE TO THE ANNIHILATION OF EVERYTHING GOOD.
GOOD? WHAT DO I CARE FOR GOOD?
IN MY LIFE, I HAVE EMBRACED BOTH GOOD AND EVIL, THAT MY KNOWLEDGE OF EACH SHOULD BE COMPLETE.
SARSON THE SORCERER DOES NOT PLAY FAVORITES.
NEITHER DOES BARON WINTER... BUT HE OFFERED US THE USE OF HIS HOUSE WITHOUT QUESTION.
WINTER DID? HMM...
I SHOULD LIKE TO SEE THE INTERIOR OF THAT FASCINATING MANSION ONCE MORE. HE GUARDS ITS SECRETS SO JEALOUSLY
WELL, WE'D BE HONORED IF SOMEONE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE WOULD JOIN US... ALTHOUGH WE COULD GET INTO SOME DANGEROUS TERRITORY ONCE THINGS START HAPPENING...
DANGEROUS?
PLEASE, YOUNG MAN, DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF ON MY ACCOUNT...
NO SMOKI
I'VE BEEN THERE.

HEY... ARE YOU SURE WE'RE GOING THE RIGHT WAY? I'VE NEVER BEEN AS FAR AS THIS BEFORE...
WE ARE IN THE HALFWAY TERRITORIES BETWEEN HEAVEN AND THE VAST RUINATION BEYOND.
IT IS HERE WE WILL FIND THE ONE WE SEEK.
ARE YOU SURE... THAT ONE SUCH AS HE IS SKILLED ENOUGH TO HELP US?
IN THE FACE OF WHAT THE BAUJERIA HAVE CALLED UP, IF HIS HELP IS REFUSED, WE ARE LOST.
WE MUST FIND THE SPECTRE.
THERE IS NO NEED TO SEARCH. WALKER OF THE PATHWAYS BETWEEN SHADE AND SUBSTANCE...
THE THING YOU SEEK IS ALL ABOUT YOU.
SPECTRE... IF YOU KNOW OF OUR PRESENCE, THEN YOU KNOW WHY WE HAVE COME HERE.
OF COURSE.
YOU ARE FOLLOWING THE DARK BIRD.

"I HEARD ITS WINGS BEATING OVER HEAVEN 'RAVELING PAST INTO THESE DUSK LATITUDES BEYOND.
"I SAW THE GLINT OF THE PEARL IN ITS BEAK."
AND YOU DID NOTHING TO STOP IT?
SPECTRE, THIS BIRD WILL BRING BACK A HORROR BEYOND EVEN YOUR IMAGININGS!
IT WILL BRING BACK THE ORIGINAL DARKNESS.
"HEH! LET IT." I HAVE HEARD OF THIS "ORIGINAL DARKNESS"... A WHISPERED LEGEND EVEN IN THIS PLACE WHERE ALL IS LEGEND...
"LET THE BIRD'S PEARL TALISMAN WAKE IT UP. LET IT CROWL BACK INTO THE LIGHT..."
...WHERE MY GREAT WRATH MAY SHRIVEL IT TO DUST, ONCE AND FOR ALL TIME
I AM THE FINAL CHAMPION OF THAT VOICE WHICH SPEAKS IN ALL THINGS. I SHALL BE THERE, WHEN I AM NEEDED.
"...AND PERHAPS, AT LAST, AN ADVERSARY WILL BE FOUND TO TRULY TEST MY WORTH.
"GO NOW KNOW THAT THE SPECTRE STANDS BESIDE YOU, AND BE REASSURED."
REASSURED? IS HE CRAZY? HE LET THAT BIRD THROUGH SO HE'D HAVE SOMETHING BIG ENOUGH TO SCRAP WITH!
I... I FEAR THAT YOU ARE RIGHT.
COME. WE MUST CONTINUE, TOWARDS HELL, HOPING THAT ALL EXISTENCE DOES NOT SOON FOLLOW US.

JOHN? CAN YOU SLOW DOWN A LITTLE? THIS IS DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW...
YOU SAY THE BRUJERÍA ARE DESTROYED, BUT THEIR PLAN IS STILL GOING ON?
THAT'S RIGHT. WITHIN ROUGHLY EIGHT HOURS, THE PEARL WILL BE DELIVERED AND THE DARKNESS WILL BE COMING BACK.
WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS DARKNESS? IS IT SATAN?
MORE THAN SATAN, MY LOVE. MUCH MORE THAN SATAN.
IT'S THE ARMAGEDDON SHADOW ITSELF. EVIL IS JUST A PART OF WHAT IT IS.
IF IT CAN'T BE CONTAINED IN THE SPIRIT WORLD, I DON'T SEE WHAT HELP THIS SOIRÉE AT BARON WINTER'S WILL BE
I'VE GOT IT ALL PLANNED OUT. THERE'S A WAY WE CAN CHANNEL OUR COLLECTIVE ENERGIES THROUGH TO THE HIGHER TERRITORIES, AIDING THE STRUGGLE
IF YOU AND ZATANNA COULD HELP, I'D BE OBLIGED.
BAH! I DON'T KNOW..
WELL, YOU CAN COUNT ME IN WHEN DO WE LEAVE FOR GEORGETOWN?
WAIT A MINUTE! I REMEMBER YOU, CONSTANTINE. I'M NOT SURE I WANT YOU ABDUCTING MY DAUGHTER AND FILLING HER HEAD WITH THIS MODERN-STYLE OCCULTISM
FATHER, DON'T BE STUPID! I'M A GROWN WOMAN.
NO BUTS! IF YOU'RE DETERMINED TO GO ALONG WITH THIS, THEN I SHALL ESCORT YOU.
NOW, PLEASE SEE MR CONSTANTINE OUT. WE MUST PACK.


HMM. WELL, AT LEAST HE'S AGREED TO COME, IF NOT FOR THE RIGHT REASONS.
AHHH, HE'S NEVER TRUSTED ME, NOT SINCE HE FOUND OUT WE WERE ATTENDING THAT TANTRIC STUDIES GROUP TOGETHER.
OH! THE ONE IN SAN FRANCISCO! THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. I'D FORGOTTEN.
FORSOTTEN?
WELL, THAT'S VERY FLATTERING, THAT IS. I HADN'T FORGOTTEN.
YOU HAD YOUR OLD COSTUME THEN. PITY YOU CHANGED IT
OH, COME ON, JOHN... A TOP HAT AND FISHNET STOCKINGS?
YEAH, WELL, I LIKED IT.
PROBABLY WHY I NEVER GOT FAR AS A MAGICIAN: TOO CONCERNED WITH THE DELIGHTS OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD.
HANNA. COME ON.. GET OUT BEFORE DAD CHANGES YOU INTO SOMETHING EVEN MORE THAN YOU ALREADY ARE.
NOT POSSIBLE.
TAKE CARE, GAL. I'LL SEE YOU AND ZATARA LATER AT WINTER'S PLACE.
GOOD-BYE, JOHN. YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED. YOU'VE STILL GOT A HELL OF A NERVE.
YEAH, WELL...
IT'S A HELL OF A WORLD.

STRANGER. LISTEN. THIS IS IT. I AM NOT GOING ANY FURTHER. I AM WAY OFF MY HOME TURF ALREADY.
THERE IS NO FURTHER TO GO BEYOND THIS IS HELL BEYOND HELL, ONLY THE RAGING, INCOHERENT CHAOPLASM.
WILL WE FIND
ETRIGAN?
ISN'T HE ONE OF THE RAKSHASA'S DEMONS? THEY'RE BAD NEWS
PARADISE MUST BE SAVED, AND THEY HAVE POWER
SPRAC
FSSSK
DOES HEAVEN COME TO HELL IN SEARCH OF AID? ARE THOSE CAST OUT SOON WELCOMED BACK INSIDE WHEN DANGER THREATENS? SIRS, I AM DISMAYED! I'D CREDITED THE ANGELS WITH MORE PRIDE
YAAGH! LOOK OUT
...WHEN THE DEVIL DRIVES?
RAMA KUSHNA'S LIPS. SOMETHING'S ALIVE IN THERE
OR IS IT, LIKE SO MUCH WITHIN OUR LIVES, A CASE OF NEEDS MUST..
TO

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

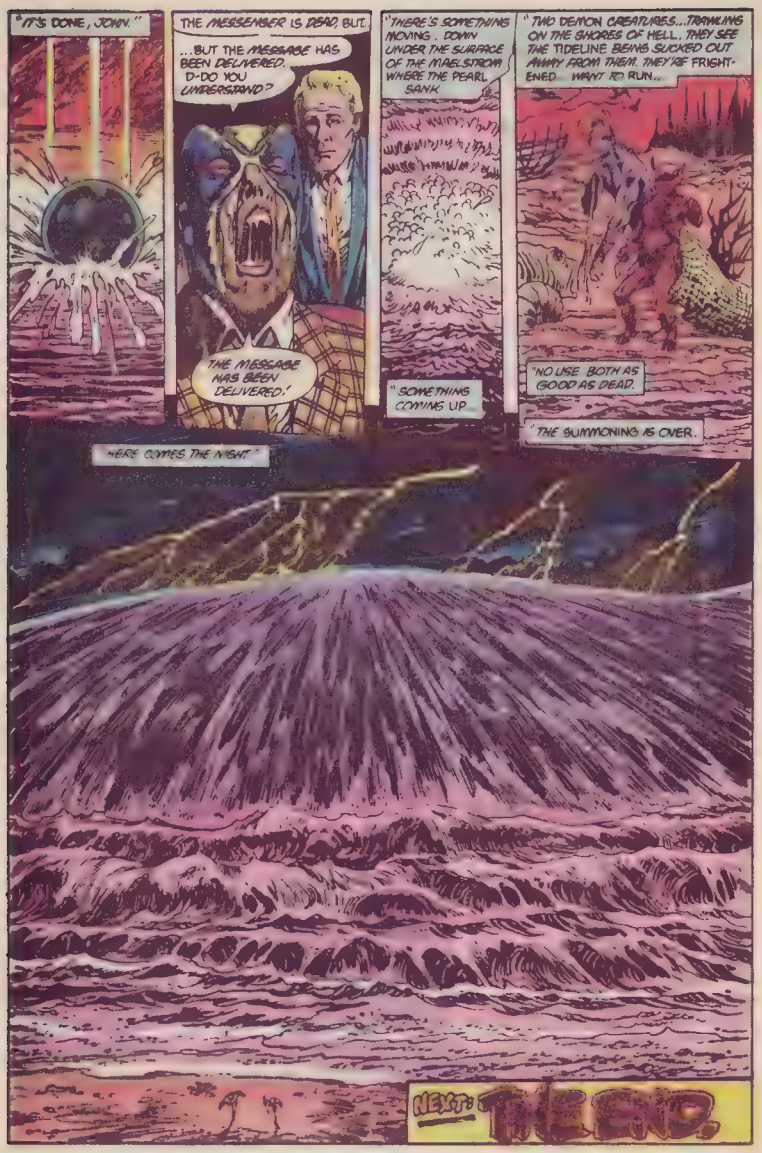
YOU WERE WAITING FOR US, DEMON. HAS NEWS OF THE SUMMONING REACHED EVEN HERE?
I SAW A SOOT-BLACK CROW GLIDE OVERHEAD AND ONWARD, BEYOND REASON'S FARTHEST SHORE, PASSING FROM SIGHT, 'ERE I COULD STRIKE IT DEAD...
...MY SPITTLE SINGED ITS FEATHERS, BUT NO MORE.
YOU TRIED TO STOP IT? I HAD FEARED YOU MIGHT WELCOME THE DARKNESS IT FLIES TO AWAKEN.
ON THAT POINT HELL IS UNABLE TO AGREE. THE BASER FIENDS LOOK FORWARD TO THE SHOW, WHILE MISHER CADRES TEND TO SIDE WITH ME IN FAVORING THE DEVIL THAT WE KNOW.
HOW MANY STAND WITH US...?
PERHAPS TWO HUNDRED OF THE RANK AND FILE, NINE RHYMERS, AND A TROOP OF CAVALRY TAKE ARM AGAINST THIS RESURRECTION VILE, AS MANY SIDING WITH OUR ENEMY.
THIS WAR SHALL BURN WHITE-HOT, AND SHOULD WE FALL...
...THEN MADNESS WITHOUT END SHALL CLAIM US ALL.

JOHN... JOHN, MY MIND! MY MIND WON'T TAKE ALL THIS. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE PRESSURED ME INTO COMING...
PRESSURED? HOW COULD A WORKING-CLASS LAD LIKE ME PRESSURE THE WORLD'S FIFTH RICHEST MAN?
I'M SERIOUS, JOHN. I'VE NEVER BEEN A MYSTIC. I DON'T FIT IN WITH THESE PEOPLE.
A-AND WITH ALL THE STRESS I'VE BEEN UNDER LATELY
LOOK, JUST RELAX. LET'S GO AND FIND A QUIET ROOM SOMEWHERE. THERE'S PLENTY OF 'EM.
I-I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO RELAX. I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING. I KEEP THINKING I OUGHT TO LEAVE HERE, NOW, WHILE I STILL CAN
JOHN? YOU SAID THIS WOULDN'T BE DANGEROUS. WAS THAT TRUE?
OF COURSE
WHAT SORT OF PERSON WOULD LIE ABOUT A THING LIKE THAT.
NO, NO, YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M SORRY, JOHN. IT'S JUST THAT MY LIFE'S BEEN SO STRANGE LATELY
I'M BEING FOLLOWED. DID I TELL YOU THAT? BY SUPER-HUMANS
UH.. WELL, NEVER MIND. STEVE. YOU'RE SAFE HERE. DID YOU BRING THE HELMET?
OF COURSE. ALTHOUGH I CAN'T SEE WHY YOU NEED IT WITH TALENTS LIKE ZATANNA OUT THERE
MAGIC ISN'T EVERYTHING. BELIEVE ME, YOU AND YOUR HELMET ARE MAJOR FACTORS IN MY STRATEGY
UH... I MEAN, OUR STRATEGY

YOU SEE, BARON WINTER'S HOUSE IS UNIQUE. IT'S NOT REALLY FIXED IN TIME THE SAME WAY EVERYTHING ELSE IS
IT'S SEPARATE FROM THE EVERYDAY WORLD AND CLOSER TO THE INTANGIBLE REALMS. THAT'S WHY I CHOSE IT.
I FIGURE YOUR HELMET-ENHANCED MENTAL ABILITIES CAN FORGE A PSYCHIC LINK WITH THE AFTERWORLD TO CHANNEL OUR ENERGIES THROUGH.
C'MON... STICK IT ON, LET'S HAVE A TEST RUN.
JOHN, PLEASE, I'M NOT SURE.
STEVE, C'MON. THIS IS IMPORTANT. WE'VE GOT LESS THAN TWO HOURS BEFORE THE FIREWORKS START TO PROPERLY TEST THIS OUT.
THERE. VERY STYLISH.
OKAY... NOW LET'S START WITH SOMETHING NICE AND EASY.
THAT DR. OCCULT BLOKE, IN THE OTHER ROOM... THE ONE WHO TURNED UP LATE AND UNINVITED. I DON'T KNOW HIM. COULD YOU CHECK HIM OUT?
I'M TRYING FROM HIS SURFACE THOUGHTS HE SEEMS GENUINE ENOUGH, I SENSE GREAT AGE AND POWER, BUT..
INCREDIBLE. HE'S AWARE OF MY PRESENCE. HE'S SHUTTING ME OUT OF HIS MIND..."
HMMM WELL, MAYBE THAT'S A SIGN THAT WE SHOULD MOVE ON. LET'S SEE IF WE CAN MAKE CONTACT WITH THE SPIRIT DIMENSIONS.
Y-YES... I'M GETTING SOME VAGUE IMAGERY..

"I...I SEE A BIRD.
"IT'S FLYING TOWARDS ME AND... AND THERE'S SOMETHING IN ITS MOUTH. WAIT A MINUTE. I'M TRYING TO FOCUS ON THE LANDSCAPE IT'S FLYING OVER.
"OH, GOD. OH, GOD, JOHN, YOU SHOULD SEE...
"THERE'S SOMETHING AS BIG AS A CONTINENT BENEATH ME. SOME SORT OF MASSIVE FORTRESS, LIKE A HUGE CONCENTRATION CAMP... JOHN? JOHN, COULD IT BE...
"COULD IT BE HELL?
"THE BIRD IS FLYING ON NOW...PAST THE FORTRESS..
"B-BUT THE TERRITORY BEYOND THAT POINT IT... IT ISN'T LIKE REAL GEOGRAPHY AT ALL!
"EVERYTHING CHANGING, CONSTANTLY IN FLUX, SHIFTING FROM ONE STATE TO ANOTHER, CONJURING SHAPES AND COLORS WITHOUT NAMES.
"JOHN, THIS IS MAKING ME FEEL SICK. I'M GOING TO SHIFT FROM THE BIRD.. TRY TO LOCATE SOMETHING ELSE...
"FUNNY...SOMEHOW THE IMAGE IS DIFFICULT TO SHAKE OFF...
"UUGH! I JUST TOUCHED SOME MINDS. UGLY, DISEASED MINDS.
"IT MUST BE PRESSING ON THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF EVERY THINKING CREATURE THERE ON THE OTHER SIDE. WAIT. WHAT WAS THAT? I JUST FELT A..
"THREE BROTHERS, I THINK. THEY'RE... THEY'RE SOME SORT OF... I DON'T KNOW. DEVILS? DEMONS?
"THEY'VE SEEN THE BIRD PASS OVER AND THEY'RE VERY EXCITED ABOUT ITS IMPLICATIONS.

"AHH. N-NOW THE BIRD IMAGERY IS GETTING STRONGER. AGAIN. SOMEONE MUST BE THINKING ABOUT IT A LOT. .
"I. . I THINK IT'S THEM. I THINK IT'S THE ONES YOU'RE TRYING TO CONTACT!
"GOOD LORD. THEIR INTELLIGENCES. ALL SO DIFFERENT .. THE YELLOW THING HAS A MIND LIKE A TUB FULL OF BOILING CATS .. THE PLANT CREATURE IS A DARK GREEN POOL .
" AND YET, THE SAME ANXIETY DOMINATES ALL THEIR THOUGHTS..
" FLAPPING, WHEELING THROUGH A CHAOTIC INFERNO WITH NEITHER LAND NOR SKY...
" THE PEARL IN ITS BEAK . SO HEAVY.. ALL THAT FEAR AND BADNESS... IT'S GOING TO DROP IT SOON..."
IT JUST HAS TO GET FAR ENOUGH, OUT INTO THE UN-MATTER... WAIT A MOMENT. AM I PICKING UP THE BIRD'S THOUGHTS?
J-JOHN?
JOHN, IT'S THINKING! IT...IT USED TO BE HUMAN. IT USED TO BE A HUMAN.
OH, GOD.
" IT'S DYING. THE CHAOS IS TEARING IT UP... NOTHING CAN LIVE LONG IN THAT...
"ITS WINGS ARE STARTING TO SMOLDER. ITS BEAK'S OPENING TO SCREAM. THE PEARL...
" THE PEARL IS FALLING.
" FALLING DOWN DOWN INTO A SOUP OF HALF-FORMED DELIRIUM...
" THE SPLASH. DID YOU HEAR IT? IT SOUNDED SO LOUD, YOU COULD HEAR IT A WORLD AWAY.


"IT'S DONE, JOHN."
THE MESSENGER IS DEAD, BUT...
...BUT THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN DELIVERED. D-DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN DELIVERED.'
"THERE'S SOMETHING MOVING... DOWN UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE MAELSTROM WHERE THE PEARL SANK
"SOMETHING COMING UP...
"TWO DEMON CREATURES...TRAMPLING ON THE SHORES OF HELL. THEY SEE THE TIDELINE BEING SUCKED OUT AWAY FROM THEM. THEY'RE FRIGHTENED... WANT TO RUN...
"NO USE. BOTH AS GOOD AS DEAD.
"THE SUMMONING IS OVER.
"HERE COMES THE NIGHT."
NEXT: THE END.

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SWAMP THING
WHO are the LORDS OF THE ULTRA REALM?
by MOORE, BISSETTE, VEITCH & TOTLEBEN

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THE SKY.. WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT? WHAT'S GOING ON?
MAN! CALL YOURSELF A KEEPER OF THE STORIES? YOU CAN'T EVEN KEEP UP WITH CURRENT EVENTS!
FORTUNATELY, I'VE MANAGED TO REMAIN INFORMED ON THE SITUATION...
TH-THAT ISN'T FAIR! I WAS DOWN A WELL WITH A CRUSHED WINDPIPE...
BAH! EXCUSES!
MY INVESTIGATIONS INDICATE THAT MEDDLERS ON EARTH HAVE SUCCEEDED IN AWAKENING A TERRIBLE PRIMORDIAL SHADOW THAT SLEPT IN THE CHAOS BEYOND HELL...
ON THE BATTLEFIELDS BENEATH US, ALL OUR STORIES OF RIGHT AND WRONG MAY COME TO THEIR INARGUABLE CONCLUSION..
...AND WHAT THEN, MY POOR, WRETCHED, OVER-FED DOLT OF A BROTHER?
WHAT SHALL BECOME OF US THEN?
INFORMED SOURCES EXPECT THE DARKNESS TO ADVANCE ACROSS THE AFTERWORLD UPON THE PLACE OF LIGHTS ITSELF.
CONSEQUENTLY, EVERYONE HAS CHOSEN SIDES, DEPENDING ON WHOM THEY EXPECT TO WIN
YOU... HURFF... YOU MEAN THERE IS DOUBT?
GRAVE DOUBT. THIS IS NO FALLEN ANGEL OF LEVIATHAN HEAVEN FACES ...THIS IS THE SOUL OF DARKNESS ITSELF. A COMPLETE ABSENCE OF DIVINE LIGHT.
B-BUT SURELY, IT'S ONLY ANOTHER STORY, GOOD AGAINST EVIL, LIGHT AGAINST DARK...
IDIOT! THIS IS ULTIMATE DARK, ULTIMATE LIGHT, THE FORCES AND THE STAKES HERE ARE FUNDAMENTAL AND ABSOLUTE...
...AND WHICHEVER SIDE MEETS ITS FINAL DESTRUCTION THIS DAY, EVERYTHING WILL BE CHANGED.

SWAMP THING

CREATED BY LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON

"THE END"

ALAN MOORE, WRITER ★ KAREN BERGER, EDITOR
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*AND SPECIAL THANKS TO TOM MANDRAKE.

UGHHH Y'KNOW, I NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE TO A HERD OF DEMONS BEFORE. THEY SMELL LIKE SOMETHING CRAWLED UP A DRAIN AND DIED.

I JUST KEEP TRYING TO REMEMBER THAT THEY'RE ON OUR SIDE.

IN THE FACE.. OF WHAT APPROACHES THEY HAVE AS MUCH TO LOSE AS ME..

EVEN HELL ..HAS ITS STATUS QUO..

THAT DIDN'T STOP THE MAJORITY OF THESE SLEAZE BAGS FROM SIDING WITH THE OPPOSITION.

LOOK AT 'EM.. OUT THERE IN THE BADLANDS SURROUNDING HELL WHERE EVERYTHING BREAKS DOWN INTO CHAOS, HOPING THEIR BOY WILL REMEMBER THEM IF HE WINS...

THE DARK THING . SURFACED . HOURS AGO. WHY DON'T . THEY ATTACK..?

I DUNNO. THE STRANGER SAYS THAT THIS THING'S BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE ORDERED UNIVERSE SINCE ITS FORMATION.

MAYBE IT'S THINKING THINGS OVER BEFORE MAKING ANY BULL MOVES.

PERHAPS. WHERE ARE... THE STRANGER... AND ETRIGAN...?

ETRIGAN SAID HE WAS GOING TO ASSEMBLE THE HIGHER DEMONS AND THE CAVALRY. .AT LEAST I THINK THAT'S WHAT HE SAID.

THE STRANGER JUST VANISHED. Y'KNOW... HIS WHOLE LONE RANGER BIT.

HE BURNS MY DEAD BUTT.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

I... RESPECT HIM

I SENSE.. A DEEP SORROW WITHIN HIM... BORN IN SILENCE...

YEAH? WELL, YOU HAVEN'T BEEN LOOKIN' TOO CAREFREE YOURSELF. HOW ARE THINGS WITH YOU?

I AM... TROUBLED...

THE COMING CONFLICT... FINDS ME UNCERTAIN... IN MY HEART.

ON THE LONG... AND WINDING PATH .. THAT LED ME... TO THIS PLACE... I HAVE SEEN... MUCH THAT IS EVIL...

"I HAVE HELPED.. ONE COMMUNITY... DESTROY ANOTHER .. BECAUSE IT WAS DIFFERENT... AND BECAUSE IT POSED A THREAT...

"AND AFTERWARDS... I THOUGHT... DID HISTORY'S VILEST BUTCHERS... DO ANY WORSE?

" IS EVIL.., UNAVOIDABLE...?

"I HAVE SEEN.. HUMAN BEINGS... BOTH TORMENTORS AND TORMENTED. LOCKED INTO A DISMAL CIRCLE... OF PAIN AND RETRIBUTION...

"GENDER AGAINST GENDER ...RACE AGAINST RACE... GENERATIONS LOST... IN A MAZE OF DEATH... AND GUILT... AND GUNFIRE...

" I HAVE SEEN... THE HUMAN MONSTERS... THAT THIS AWFUL PATTERN... HAS SHAPED... REJOICING... IN THE SENSELESSNESS THEY SEE IN LIFE... BY KILLING WITHOUT MOTIVE ..

"THE MAN WHO STARTED ME... UPON THIS DARK TRAIL.. PROMISED ME ANSWERS..."

BUT THE ANSWERS... SEEM BLACK.. AND UNBEARABLE... AND AS THE STORM APPROACHES.. I NEED HIM... TO EXPLAIN THEM.. TO ME.

BUT I... AM IN THE COUNTRY .. OF THE DEAD...

... AND ME... IS A WHISPER AWAY.

IT'S GETTING CLOSER, JOHN.

I KNOW. I CAN FEEL IT.

I SUPPOSE I'D BETTER GET EVERYBODY ORGANIZED FOR THE ORDEAL.

ORDEAL?

NOTHING JUST ONE OF MY QUAINT ENGLISH FIGURES OF SPEECH FORGET IT.

YOU LOOK TIRED AND WORRIED, JOHN. HOW MUCH SLEEP HAVE YOU BEEN GETTING LATELY?

I CAN REMEMBER A TIME WHEN YOU WOULDN'T HAVE NEEDED TO ASK.

YOUNG MAN? ARE WE READY TO BEGIN?

I SUPPOSE SO.

OKAY...WHAT WE'RE ATTEMPTING IS TO DIRECT OUR COMBINED ENERGIES TOWARDS AIDING THE STRUGGLE IN THE AFTERWORLD.

WE START BY LINKING HANDS.

REMEMBER I'M WATCHING YOU, YOUNG LADY

FA-THER!

ONCE THE ENERGY FLOW GETS UNDER WAY, IT'S IMPORTANT NOT TO BREAK THE CIRCLE, THE FEEDBACK COULD KILL US.

WE ALL KNOW THAT, BOY.

H-WAIT..

DIDN'T YOU SAY THIS DANGEROUS ENERGY WOULD BE CHANNELED THROUGH ME?

DON'T WORRY...AS LONG AS NOBODY PANICS AND RELEASES THE HAND THEY'RE HOLDING, EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE, INCLUDING YOU.

NOW, IF WE COULD START OUR INITIAL PROBE INTO THE AFTERWORLD.

WELL. IF YOU'RE SURE IT'S SAFE...

...ALTHOUGH THE MEMTO HELMET WASN'T DESIGNED FOR THIS SORT OF WORK.

SCIENCE AND SORCERY.. AN EXPLOSIVE COMBINATION. I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, CONSTANTINE.

YEAH, WELL, WE'LL SEE. HAVE YOU MADE CONTACT YET, STEVE?

YES...YES, I THINK SO...

I'M WITH THAT DEMON CREATURE I ENCOUNTERED DURING OUR TRIAL RUN... THE ONE WHO SPEAKS IN VERSE.

HE'S PREPARING FOR WAR.

ETRIGAN? I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS WITH US...

STEVE, WHAT'S HE DOING? HAS THE BATTLE STARTED?

"NO... NOT YET.

"HE'S TALKING TO SOME OTHER DEMONS. THEY SPEAK IN VERSE, TOO. I THINK THEY'RE THE SAME RANK AS HIM...

"HE'S PUTTING ON HIS ARMOR. IT'S..."

...IT'S STRANGE... HIS ARMOR CONSISTS OF SEPARATE METALLIC LUMPS WITH BARBED FLAILS ATTACHED.

HE PICKS THEM OUT OF A BASKET AND IMPALES THEM ON THIS SPIKED HARNESS HE'S WEARING...

WAIT A MINUTE. IT LOOKS LIKE...

"IT'S WRIGGLING!

"OH, NO. HIS ARMOR. HIS ARMOR IS ALIVE!

"DEAR GOD, JOHN, WHAT HAVE YOU ALLIED US WITH?"

HOW STRANGE AS DARKNESS FALLS TO SIDE WITH LIGHT; THERE'S NO RESPITE WITHIN THESE WALLS FROM CHANGE.

SWEET LISQUINELLE, MY CARRION-ARMORED FRIEND...

..'TIS BETTER TIMES SHOULD CHANGE..

...THAN THEY SHOULD END.

WE AHYM'ERS ARE HELL'S CREAM, THE PIT'S ELITE, AND YET, BUT FRAGMENTS OF A HIGHER PLAN. GOD'S BALANCE MUST ENDURE, AND ITS DEFEAT SHALL NOT GO UNOPPOSED..

SKRUNCH

...BY ETRIGAN!

COME...TO THE STABLES! WE'VE NOT TIME TO JAIN MY ARMOR WRITHES, ANTICIPATING WAR

AGREED LET US BE GONE OUR MOUNTS STAND NEAR, A DEMON PEER SITS CROUCHED UPON EACH STEED.

MAY I REMARK, THOUGH IN POOR VERSE, THEIR ASPECT'S FIERCE. THEIR STENCH IS WORSE.

MOST NOBLE SPITTLEFLECK, YOUR RHYMES IMPROVE. COULD THEY DO OTHERWISE? NOW...LET US MOUNT THESE SLOBBERING, STEAMING HORRORS AND REMOVE..

..TO WHERE THE BLOOD RUNS HOT FROM GLORY'S FOUNT!

"JOHN? I THINK THE DEMON AND HIS COMRADES ARE GOING TO JOIN YOUR OTHER ALLIES I'M GOING TO SWEET ROSIE AND TRY TO FIND THEM MYSELF

"AHH. I'VE GOT THEM THERE'S THE SWAMP CREATURE, AND... I DON'T KNOW.. SOME KIND OF DEAD AERIALIST

"THEY'RE IN AN ALLIED DEMON ENCAMPMENT. THE BRUTES ARE EVERY-WHERE, WITH MORE ARRIVING BY THE SECOND...

"WAIT... SOMEONE ELSE IS ARRIVING. SOMEONE UNEXPECTED...

"I CAN SENSE A MIND, ANCIENT AND VAST AND DUSTY... SAND BLOWING ENDLESSLY ACROSS ENDLESS BRONZE DESERT..

"HE... HE WEARS A GOLDEN HELMET, BUT.. BUT THE MIND I'M SENSING ISN'T THE MIND OF THE MAN INSIDE THE HELMET. IT'S...

"J-JOHN? I THINK IT'S THE MIND OF THE HELMET ITSELF."

SO... THIS IS THE BEGGAR'S ARMY ARRAYED AGAINST THE THREAT THAT DREW ME HENCE

BUT.. WHO.. ARE YOU?

DON'T BE STUPID. THAT'S DR. FATE! WHAT KIND OF BACKWATER HAVE YOU BEEN LIVING IN?

UHH... NO OFFENSE..

IN DISTANT SALEM I SENSED THE COMING STORM. IF THIS DARKNESS WOULD TRAMPLE HEAVEN, FATE'S HAND SHALL NOT BE STAYED.

YEAH, WELL, IT ISN'T DOING MUCH TRAMPLING AT THE MOMENT. THINGS SEEM PRETTY QUIET..

LIGHTS! LIGHTS COMING!

LIGHTS? ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?
I THINK NOT. WHATEVER OUR ENEMY TRULY IS, LIGHT IS NOT AMONGST ITS ATTRIBUTES
FURTHERMORE, SOME OF THE APPROACHING RADIANCES ARE KNOWN TO ME.
. WHILE HE WHO LEADS THEM IS KNOWN TO US ALL.
THEY ARE THOSE WHOSE AID I JOURNEYED TO ENLIST... HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESSES, UNFETTERED BY THE BASE DEMANDS OF FLESH.
MEN CALL THEM HOURIS, OR VALKYRIES, OR ANGELS..
YOU. HAVE FRIENDS. AMONGST THE ANGELS. ?
I HAVE... ACQUAINTANCES. THERE WERE THOSE WHO COULD BE TRUSTED TO HEAR MY REQUEST, BUT NOT AS FRIENDS. NOT THESE DAYS
THESE DAYS, WE ARE MORE AKIN TO STRANGERS.
YEAH? WELL. THE DEMONS DON'T SEEM TOO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT 'EM EITHER
THAT IS ONLY NATURAL. WHAT IS REMARKABLE IS THAT THEY SHOULD STAND UNITED AT ALL.
IN MY CONSIDERABLE SPAN, IT IS A THING UNPRECEDENTED.
INDEED WHILE THIS TRUCE ENDURES, LET US ORGANIZE THEM INTO STRUCTURED RANKS.
. FOR THE STORM WORSENS, AND THE FLOODWATERS OF BATTLE WILL NOT BE LONG IN BREAKING.
"THEY'RE GETTING READY, JOHN. IT'S STARTING...

"OUR SIDE IS FORMING INTO RANKS, WITH DEMON FOOT SOLDIERS AT THE FRONT AND THE ANGELS AND OUR ALLIES IMMEDIATELY BEHIND THEM..

"A-AND BYAKUAN'S CAVALRY HAS ARRIVED. THEY ARE FALLING IN AMONGST THE FOOT SOLDIERS..."

WHAT ABOUT THE *SPECTRE*? IS *HE* THERE YET?

NO...NO, I CAN *SENSE* HIM.

INSTEAD OF OUR ALLIES, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE AN *ADVANTAGE* TO STUDY OUR *ENEMIES*?

"YES... I CAN SEE THEM. HUNDREDS OF THEM. EVERY TERRIBLE CREATURE I EVER IMAGINED..

"I SEE THOSE THREE DEMON BROTHERS I NOTICED EARLIER, ACTING AS ORGANIZERS.

"BOTH SIDES ARE MOTIONLESS. IT'S COMPLETELY SILENT. EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR SOMETHING..

"JOHN?

"JOHN, I ..I THINK IT'S MOVING.

"IT'S JUST BEEN SITTING THERE, IN THE CHAOS BEYOND HELL, EVER SINCE IT BROKE THE SURFACE, BUT..

"IT'S COMING, JOHN OH, GOD, OH, NO. OH, NO, IT'S SO BIG..."

IT..IT JUST KEEPS COMING, UP OUT OF THE CHAOS WAVES UP AND UP AND UP..

NO! STOP IT! NOTHING'S THAT BIG! I DON'T WANT TO SEE..

TAKE CARE! YOU ALMOST SNATCHED YOUR HAND AWAY FROM MINE

"B-BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WE CAN'T FIGHT THIS! IT'S TOO BIG TOO BIG TO THINK ABOUT IT MAKES US LOOK LIKE NOTHING!

"PLEASE, JOHN, I DON'T WANT TO KNOW I DON'T WANT TO KNOW IT EXISTS YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME TAKE THE HELMET OFF

"JOHN, AS A FRIEND, PLEASE, I'M BEGGING YOU.

"NO MORE"

I'M AFRAID IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT.

I'M SORRY, STEVE.

YOUR APOLOGIES BE DAMNED, BOY! IF THE ENEMY APPROACHES, LET US BUILD UP OUR POWER LEVELS!

NO! PLEASE, JOHN. I CAN'T TAKE THIS. DR. OCCULT, ZATANNA... THEY'RE TOO POWERFUL MY MIND WON'T TAKE THE STRAIN...

JOHN, HE'S SERIOUS. SHOULDN'T WE..

FORGET IT.

WE CARRY ON.

DAYTON, LISTEN. MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, CONSTANTINE'S RIGHT. YOU CAN'T BACK OUT NOW.

BUT I... I CAN'T..

IF ANY OF US ARE TO LEAVE THIS ROOM ALIVE, YOUR ONLY HOPE IS TO COOPERATE, TO TELL US WHAT YOU SEE.

...I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH...

A MAN IS AS STRONG AS HE WILL LET HIMSELF BE. THAT IS THE FIRST TRUTH OF MAGIC.

PLEASE... TELL US HOW THE BATTLE GOES.

A-ALL RIGHT. I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE, DO I?

DAMN YOU, JOHN. I TRUSTED YOU. IF YOU KNEW. IF YOU KNEW WHAT I WAS SEEING.

HURRY! THE POWER IS BUILDING AND WE MUST KNOW WHERE TO DIRECT IT

I SAID ALL RIGHT!

I-I'M IN OUR FRONT RANKS, ALONGSIDE THE DEMON CAVALRY. THE YELLOW ONE, ETRIGAN, I'M INSIDE HIS MIND. IT'S WHITE-HOT. H-HE'S THINKING... NO. NO, THAT'S RIDICULOUS.

HE WANTS TO CHARGE THAT THING!

IT AWAITS. SEE EACH DARK SLAVE BEFORE IT RACE. THERE WE MUST FACE, HOWEVER GRAVE MY FEARS.

FEAR'S BUT A MONKEY, BROTHER LISGUINELLE...

...IT SHALL NOT DAUNT THE BLOODY DOGS OF HELL!

RHYMERS! FALL BACK, MATES, OR WE'RE SMOKED MEAT!

VILE TRAITORS! YOU DO WELL TO BE AFRAID! 'TIS ETRIGAN WHOSE WRATH YOU TEMPT THIS DAY! YOUR FLESH IS BUTTER, 'NEATH MY SMOKING BLADE; I BATHE WITHIN YOUR FINE ARTERIAL SPRAY!

MY FRIEND? YOU FLEE THIS STRIFE? I AM DISMAYED; WITHOUT YOUR AID, I FEAR MY LIFE MUST END

THERE'S NO TRUE FRIEND IN HELL, NOR TIME TO WASTE ON SLAVES; TOWARDS THEIR MASTER I MAKE HASTE

HE'S BROKEN THROUGH. ETRIGAN'S BROKEN THROUGH THE RANKS OF OPPOSING DEMONS. HE'S RIDING STRAIGHT TOWARDS THAT DAWN AS IT ROLLS UP OVER HELL'S SKYLINE.

"HE'S INSANE."

NEGATIVE

EQ? IN THIS WAR, THAT MAKES HIM OFFICER MATERIAL. IF HE'S ATTACKING DIRECT THE POWER TOWARDS HIM, STEVE. ADD OUR MUSCLE TO HIS..

"I'M TRYING, BUT... JOHN. HE'S CLOSE SO IT NOW. I'M SEEING IT THROUGH HIS EYES... ITS TEXTURE.. HORRIBLE BLACK CORRUGATIONS. PITTED...ERODED."

AND AND ITS HUNGER, MASSIVE ENOUGH TO FEEL IT'S BEEN BARRED FROM THIS UNIVERSE SINCE IT BEGAN AND IT'S HUNGRY..

HUNGRY FOR KNOWLEDGE. UNDERSTANDING.. OH, IT'S IN SO MUCH PAIN...

MENTO, DON'T MAKE FULL CONTACT WITH IT! IT'LL DESTROY YOU! THE POWER'S BUILDING AND YOU'VE GOT TO CONCENTRATE ON ETRIGAN!

"ETRIGAN? ME. HE'S IN TROUBLE. HE'S FIGHTING IT, BUT. HE'S SINKING. THE THING'S INDIVIDUAL PLATES JUST SEPARATE, FLOWING LIKE BLACK MUD..."

HE'S DROWNING! HE'S DROWNING IN IT... CREEPING UP HIS CHEST.. OH, IT'S SO COLD...

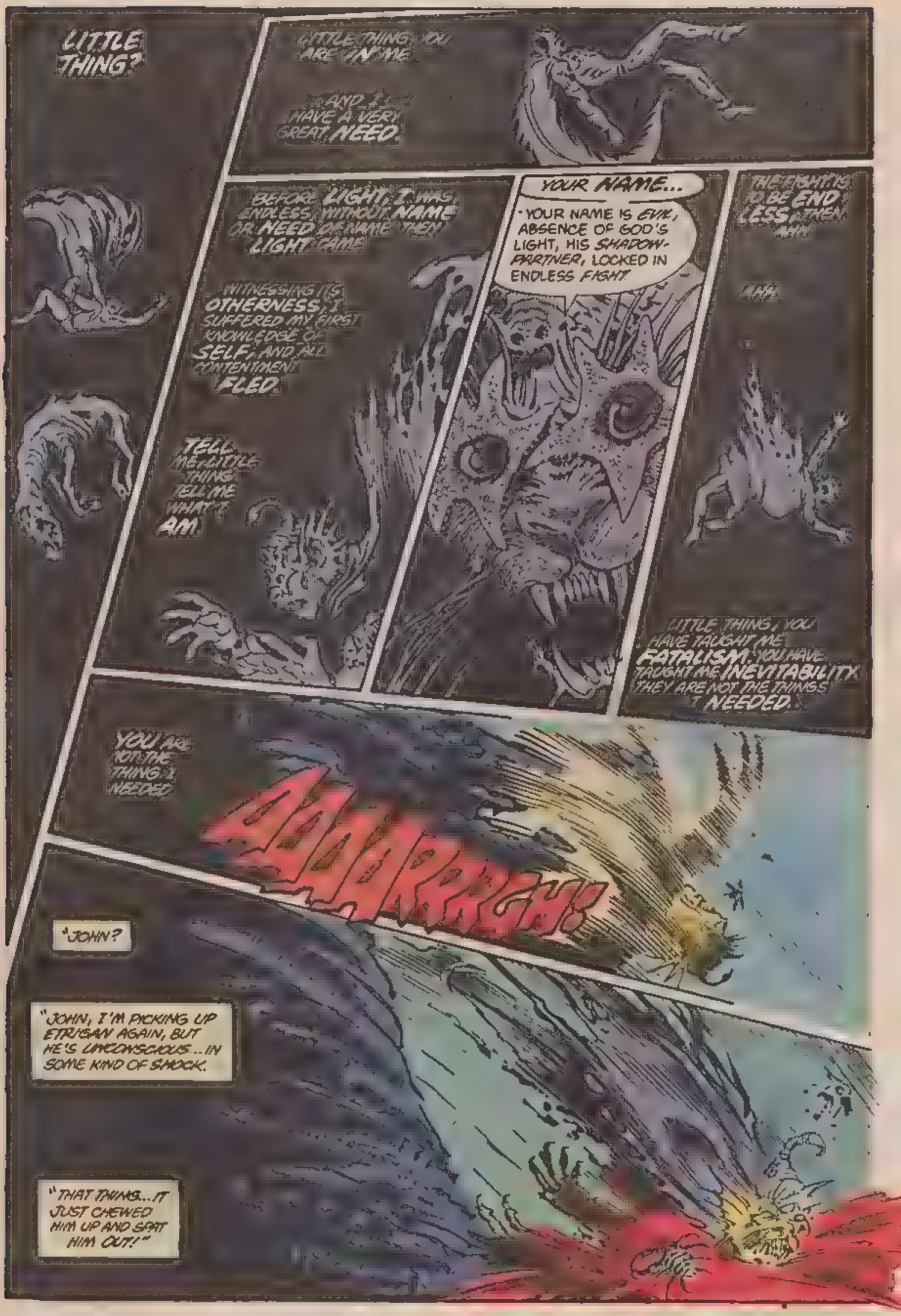
IT'S COLD, IT'S COLD, IT'S COLD...

DAYTON! DON'T LOSE HIM! KEEP FOCUSING OUR POWER, HELP HIM FIGHT HIS WAY FREE...

"I'M TRYING. SO DIFFICULT TO HOLD ON...

"ETRIGAN'S STRUGGLING. HE THINKS THERE'S A CHANCE HE CAN GET OUT. HE'S REACHING FOR A HANDHOLD."

HE'S GONE.


LITTLE THING?
LITTLE THING, YOU ARE IN ME.
AND I HAVE A VERY GREAT NEED.
BEFORE LIGHT, I WAS ENDLESS, WITHOUT NAME OR NEED OF NAME. THEN LIGHT CAME.
WITNESSING ITS OTHERNESS, I SUFFERED MY FIRST KNOWLEDGE OF SELF, AND ALL CONTENTMENT FLED.
TELL ME, LITTLE THING. TELL ME WHAT I AM.
YOUR NAME...
YOUR NAME IS EVIL, ABSENCE OF GOD'S LIGHT, HIS SHADOW-PARTNER, LOCKED IN ENDLESS FIGHT.
THE FIGHT IS TO BE END LESS, THEN AHH.
AHH.
LITTLE THING, YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME FATALISM. YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME INEVITABILITY. THEY ARE NOT THE THINGS I NEEDED.
YOU ARE NOT THE THING I NEEDED.
AAAARRRGH!
"JOHN?
"JOHN, I'M PICKING UP ETRIGAN AGAIN, BUT HE'S UNCONSCIOUS... IN SOME KIND OF SHOCK.
"THAT THING... IT JUST CHEWED HIM UP AND SPAT HIM OUT!"

I-IT'S MOVING ON, CONTINUING ACROSS THE WASTELANDS TOWARDS OUR ARMY. THE WAY IT MOVES, IT'S LIKE A SLUG, OR A...

OH. I JUST CAUGHT SOMETHING... A SUDDEN WAVE OF ATTENTION...

OH, GOD. IT'S NOTICED US.

IT KNOWS WE'RE WATCHING IT. I CAN FEEL IT, SHRUGGING ITSELF, LIKE AN ANIMAL SHAKING OFF A FLY, PUCKERING US AWAY...

BRACE YOURSELVES. THERE COULD BE SOME SORT OF

KRITTSSHHHH

...SHOCKWAVE...

AAAA! THE POWER SURGE! IT HURTS!

JOHN, WHAT'S HAPPENING?

IT'S LASHING OUT AT US. SIT TIGHT AND DON'T LET GO OF MY HAND.

CAN YOU FEEL IT? THE FORCE OF ITS BLOW, RACING 'ROUND THE CIRCLE, LOOKING FOR A WEAK LINK IN THE CIRCUIT...

W-WINTER... I'M.. I FEEL..

SARGON?

I-I'M BURNING. THE POWER.. IT'S TOO MUCH. I'M GETTING WARMER, INSIDE ME, I'M.

JOHN, HE'S SMOLDERING! HE'S GOING TO COMBUST!

NO! NO, I WILL NOT PERMIT IT..

NO! NO NO NO! ONE OF YOU MUST HELP ME! I AM SARGON! YOU CANNOT LET THIS HAPPEN..

YOU... YOU ARE RIGHT. FORGIVE ME, MY FRIENDS. IT WAS THE PAIN THAT SPOKE...

NOT I.

SARGON!

SARGON, YOU ARE UPSETTING MY DAUGHTER FOR THE HONOR OF OUR PROFESSION, BE SILENT AND DIE LIKE A SORCEROR

FUUMMF!

AAARRRGH!

CONSTANTINE... DON'T LET GO, MAN...

JUST... DON'T... LET... GO... IT WILL SOON... BE OVER...

H-HE BURNED. HE JUST SAT THERE, AND, AND...

AND HE BURNED.

I-IT'S ALL RIGHT THE CIRCLE WASN'T BROKEN WE CAN CARRY ON

BUT, JOHN SARGON'S DEAD! AND YOUR HAND.

I SAID WE CARRY ON! THIS ISN'T THE SORT OF PUNCH-UP THAT WE CAN JUST WALK AWAY FROM! WE CARRY ON FIGHTING...

...TO THE LAST MAN, IF NEED BE.

OUR GUNS HAVE BROKEN *BRAAK*. THE GUTLESS WIMPS ARE RUNNING *AWAY!*

WHEN *ETRIGAN* AND THE *OTHER* RHYMERS FELL, I FEAR THE *REMAINING* DEMONS LOST WHAT WAS LEFT OF THEIR *MORALE*.

WHO.. COULD *BLAME* THEM... FACED WITH SUCH A *MONSTROSITY*.?

IT IS TOO *BIG*. TO EVEN FULLY GRASP. IT'S *GRAVE*.. IT SEEMS TO BE... LIKE A *MOUNTAIN*.. OR AN *ISLAND* MOVING RELENTLESSLY *FORWARD*.

AS ARE THE ARMIES THAT *SUPPORT* IT... THOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO *TELL* WHETHER THEY RUN BEFORE IT IN *TRIUMPH* OR *TERROR*.

IT *MATTERS* NOT WHATEVER THE FORCE WHICH *DRIVES* OUR ENEMY'S *MINIONS*...

...THE FORCE THAT *SHALL* STOP THEM IS *FATE*.

HEY, I'M RIGHT *BEHIND* YOU, DOC.

DEADMAN... BE *CAREFUL*...

YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW..

ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GONNA GET MYSELF *KILLED*.

OOAGH!

ABNEGAZAR, RATH, AND GHAST! WHAT HAVE YOU TO GAIN FROM SIDING WITH THIS HORROR?

A TERRIBLE NEW UNIVERSE, WHERE WE SHALL BE LORDS OF MISRULE.

THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE TO GAIN. EXPECT NO QUARTER.

NO QUARTER ASKED..

NO QUARTER GIVEN.

KZZZZZK

AAAAAAAAAA

MY BROTHERS! MY BROTHERS, I AM SLAIN!

DOC, LOOK OUT! THAT THING IS ALMOST ON TOP OF YOU!

ON TOP OF..?

MERCIFUL ISIS.

DOC!

LITTLE THING...

LITTLE THING, YOU ARE IN ME, AND I HAVE A GREAT NEED.

IN THIS STRANGE PLACE OF LIGHT AND ORDER AND NAMES, I HAVE BEEN NAMED EVIL. YET NAMING IS NOT ENOUGH. I MUST KNOW MY NATURE. I MUST KNOW MY PURPOSE.

TELL ME, LITTLE THING, WHAT IS EVIL?

EVIL?

EVIL IS A QUAGMIRE OF IGNORANCE THAT WOULD DRAG US BACK AS WE CLIMB TOWARDS THE IMMORTAL LIGHT.

A VILE, WRETCHED THING, TO BE SCRAPED FROM THE SANDALS LIKE DROMEDARY SOIL.

AM I SO LOW, THEN? AND IS HE YOU SERVE SO HIGH THAT THERE CAN BE NO POSSIBILITY OF RESPECT BETWEEN US?

LITTLE THING, YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME CONTEMPT.

IT IS NOT THE ANSWER THAT WAS REQUIRED.

SPUK!

FATE... IS DOWN DEADMAN BEARS HIM. FROM THE CREATURE'S FRAY BUT I CANNOT TELL... IF HE IS ALIVE...OR DEAD.

NOW NOTHING STANDS. BETWEEN THE DARKNESS... AND ITS TARGET SAVE ME TWO AND THE ANGELS.

WHERE... IS THE SPECTRE? HE SAID... THAT HE WOULD STAND WITH US...

THE SPECTRE'S MIND HAS LONG SINCE TRAVELED BEYOND MY COMPREHENSION. SOMETIMES, I FEAR IT HAS TRAVELED BEYOND REASON ITSELF.

ARE WE DOOMED, THEN...?

HAVE I TRUDGED... ACROSS A CONTINENT... WITNESSING HORROR AFTER HORROR... SEARCHING FOR WISDOM... FINDING ONLY DEFEAT...?

OF WHAT USE NOW... ARE THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES... AND THEIR CRYPTIC... USELESS... ADVICE...?

I... I WOULD ANSWER YOU, MY FRIEND, WERE MY OWN HEART LESS TROUBLED AND UNCERTAIN.

HEY! STRANGER! FATE'S JUST ABOUT ALIVE, BUT HE'S IN SHOCK. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TO STOP THAT THING?

WHAT WE CAN, BOSTON BRAND. WHAT WE CAN

SEE... THE ANGELS ADVANCE TOWARDS WHAT MAY BE THEIR FINAL STAND. AFTER THAT, THE FATE OF HEAVEN RESTS IN OUR HANDS...

...OUR FRAIL, FALLIBLE HANDS.

STEVE?

DON'T JUST SIT THERE *WHIMPERING*, MAN. TELL US WHAT YOU CAN *SEE*!

JOHN, DON'T *BULLY* HIM. IT'S TOUGH ENOUGH FOR *US*, AND WE'RE *USED* TO THIS SORT OF STUFF.

IT'S GOING TO GET A BLOODY SIGHT *ROUGHER* UNLESS HE *COOPERATES*!

DAYTON! SNAP OUT OF IT!

CAN'T... CAN'T *TAKE* IT...

POWER BUILDING *UP* AGAIN... IT WANTS US *DEAD*, JOHN. WE'RE A *DISTRACTION*..

HE'S *RIGHT*. I CAN FEEL IT *COMING*. PREPARE YOURSELF FOR ANOTHER *ONSLAUGHT*.

AAAA! IT'S COMING! AAAAA!

WH-WHICH OF US *THIS* TIME, JOHN? WHICH ONE OF US IS G-GOING TO BURN OUT *THIS* TIME?

DAYTON...IF YOU DON'T BLOODY SHUT *UP*..

JOHN ..?

J-JOHN, IS IT *HAWT* IN HERE ALL OF A SUDDEN? I FEEL...OH, GOD, I THINK I *M*..

NO! NO, I WILL NOT ALLOW IT!

NOT *MY* DAUGHTER

SSENKORAD EKAT EM DAEDSAH!

FATHER? NO! FATHER, DON'T! TAKE IT BACK! TAKE THE SPELL BACK!

TOO LATE, MY LOVE. TOO LATE.

CONSTANTINE... IF YOU DO NOT DELIVER MY DAUGHTER SAFELY FROM THIS PLACE, MY SHADE SHALL HOUND YOU THROUGH ALL *ETERNITY*. IS THAT *UNDERSTOOD*?

FATHER! OH, GOD, SOMEBODY HELP HIM...

FAAAAAAAATHER!

FUMFFF!

NO, YOU DON'T!

IF YOU *KNEW* HOW I WAS *FEELING*, YOU'D RUN AS FAR AS YOU *COULD* AND CRAWL UNDER A *STONE* AND *HIDE*!

OH.

OHH.

OOOHHHHHH..

ZATANNA .. PLEASE...KEEP HOLD OF HIS HAND. I *KNOW* HOW YOU MUST BE FEELING, BUT...

YOU *INVOLVED* US IN THIS! MY FATHER'S *DEAD* AND IT'S ON *YOUR* HANDS!

YEAH. THEY ALWAYS ARE.

I'M SORRY, ZATANNA. REALLY I AM.

OKAY. WHATEVER YOU WANT.

DAYTON? TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE *NEXT* WORLD...

...BECAUSE I'M SICK AS A PARROT WITH *THIS* ONE.

OH, FOR GOD'S *SAKE*! WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET *ON* WITH IT?

IT'S USELESS THE ANGELS CANNOT STOP IT. I SAW METRATON FALL, AND SEVERAL OF THE "MORNES

THEIR FAILURE CHILLS ME. THEY ARE AMONGST THE OLDEST POWERS THEY KNEW ME WHEN I HAD A NAME

AS IT NEARS ITS SHAPE. GROWS MORE DEFINABLE IT HAS LENGTH. LIKE A MASSIVE WORM. STRETCHING BACK TO THE HORIZON

YEAH OR MAYBE A SNAKE IT S ..

HEY! DID YOU FEEL THAT? THAT TREMOR? ALMOST LIKE AN...

THOOM

..EARTHQUAKE..

FATE! PROTECT FATE! HE'S HELPLESS!

WHAT... WAS IT ?

DOES THE AFTERWORLD ITSELF BEGIN TO COLLAPSE .. BENEATH THE CREATURE S WEIGHT ?

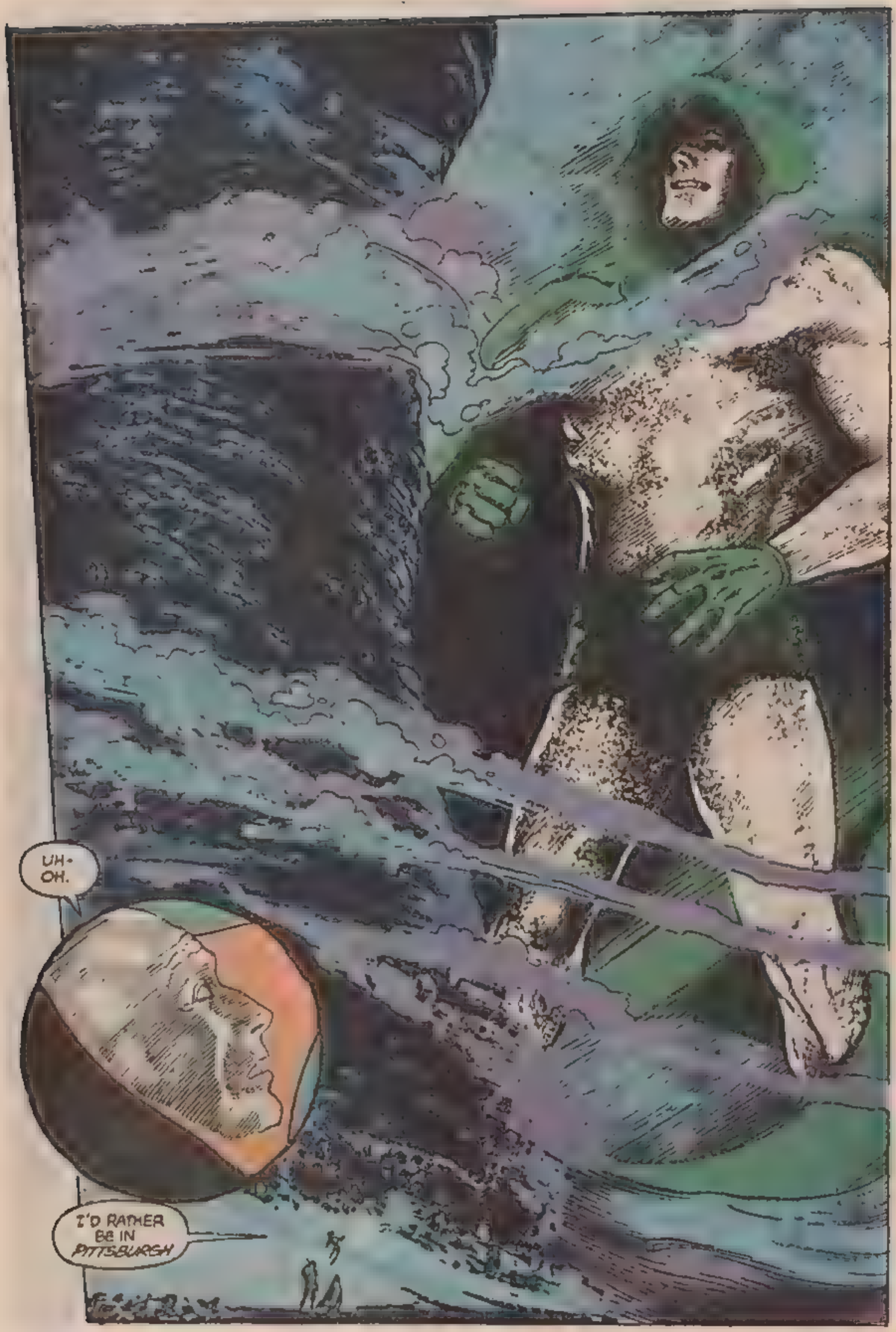
I.. I DUNNO, BUT HERE IT COMES AGAIN...

THOOM!

STRANGER? - HEY, GIVE US A HAND, WILLYA?

STRANGER? C'MON, MAN. WHAT'S THE MATTER?

THOOM!


UH-
OH.
I'D RATHER
BE IN
PITTSBURGH

"JOHN? JOHN, I ..I THINK IT'S HIM! THE ONE YOU WERE WAITING FOR. HE'S ARRIVED

"I...I CAN'T RISK MAKING FULL CONTACT WITH HIM ..BE LIKE TRYING TO SWIM THE ATLANTIC...

"HE'S SMALLER THAN THE SHADOW CREATURE, BUT HE'S BIG ENOUGH TO HAVE A CLEARER PERSPECTIVE UPON ITS SHAPE..

"ITS FRONT SURFACE... CONVEX AND FEATURELESS, LIKE THE HEAD OF A MAGGOT... ITS TOP STILL OBSCURED BY CLOUD..

"WAIT... HE'S GETTING BIGGER IN MY HEAD, HIS PRESENCE, GROWING LOUDER AND LOUDER . HIS THOUGHTS, ALMOST AUDIBLE..

"JIM ? WHO'S JIM ..? JIM .. COSTIGAN? CARRINGTON? NO.. I LOST IT...

"HE'S UP ABOVE THE CLOUDS NOW .

"UGH! HE CAN SEE IT ALL NOW. IT'S .. IT'S LIKE A SLUG WITH A BEETLE'S SHELL... A DOME OF BONE, THICK AS A CONTINENT, PROTECTING ITS BLIND, BLACK HEAD..

"THE SPECTRE... HE'S ATTACKING IT.

"I'M DIRECTING OUR POWER TO ASSIST HIM.., SEEMS POINTLESS... SO POWERFUL, CAN'T POSSIBLY NEED IT...

"HOLD ON. HE'S NOTICED SOMETHING...HE'S LOOKING UP..SOMETHING ABOVE HIM ..

"OH! OH, WHAT.. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

"TOWERS, FALLING... DARK CHIMNEYSTACKS, TOPPLING TOWARDS HIM, ME... WHERE? WHERE CAN THEY BE FALLING FROM? NO..NO, THE PERSPECTIVE... IT'S ALL WRONG...

"HE'S .. WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED? SOMETHING HAPPENED. I LOST CONTACT!

"HE'S GONE."

LITTLE THING. MY HUNGER FOR UNDERSTANDING GROWS LARGER AS MY PATIENCE DWINDLES

SHALL MY QUESTION BE ANSWERED, OR SHALL I SNUFF OUT THESE LIGHT AND BE DONE WITH THE ANGUISH ITS PRESENCE CAUSES ME?

NO! I FORBID YOU, BY THE VOICE THAT SPEAKS IN ALL THINGS...

IT DOES NOT SPEAK IN ME. IN ME, THERE IS ONLY THE HATEFUL NAGGING OF INSOLUBLE QUERY.

TELL ME, LITTLE THING: WHAT IS EVIL FOR?

EVIL EXISTS ONLY TO BE AVENGED, SO THAT OTHERS MAY SEE WHAT RUIN COMES OF OPPOSING THAT GREAT VOICE, AND CLEAVE MORE WHOLLY TO ITS WILL, FEARING ITS RETRIBUTION!

AND WHAT OF THE TORTURED EONS I ENDURED, UNABLE TO BROACH THIS MADDENING BRILLIANCE AND QUIET THE PAIN IT WOKE IN ME? DO THEY NOT DEMAND RETRIBUTION?

LITTLE THING, YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME ONLY VENGEANCE...

PTUH!

BE GONE THAT I MIGHT SAVOR IT IN SOLITUDE

"HE'S BEATEN. THE SPECTRE'S BEATEN!

"TH-THAT'S IT, IT'S TAKEN THEIR BEST SHOT. OUR ALLIES ARE FINISHED."

NO! THE SWAMP CREATURE... WHAT'S HE DOING?

BUT... JOHN, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. IT'S BEATEN THE SPECTRE.. THE SWAMP THING CAN'T..

I SAID WHAT'S HE DOING? DAMN IT, DAYTON, THIS IS WHAT I PREPARED HIM FOR!

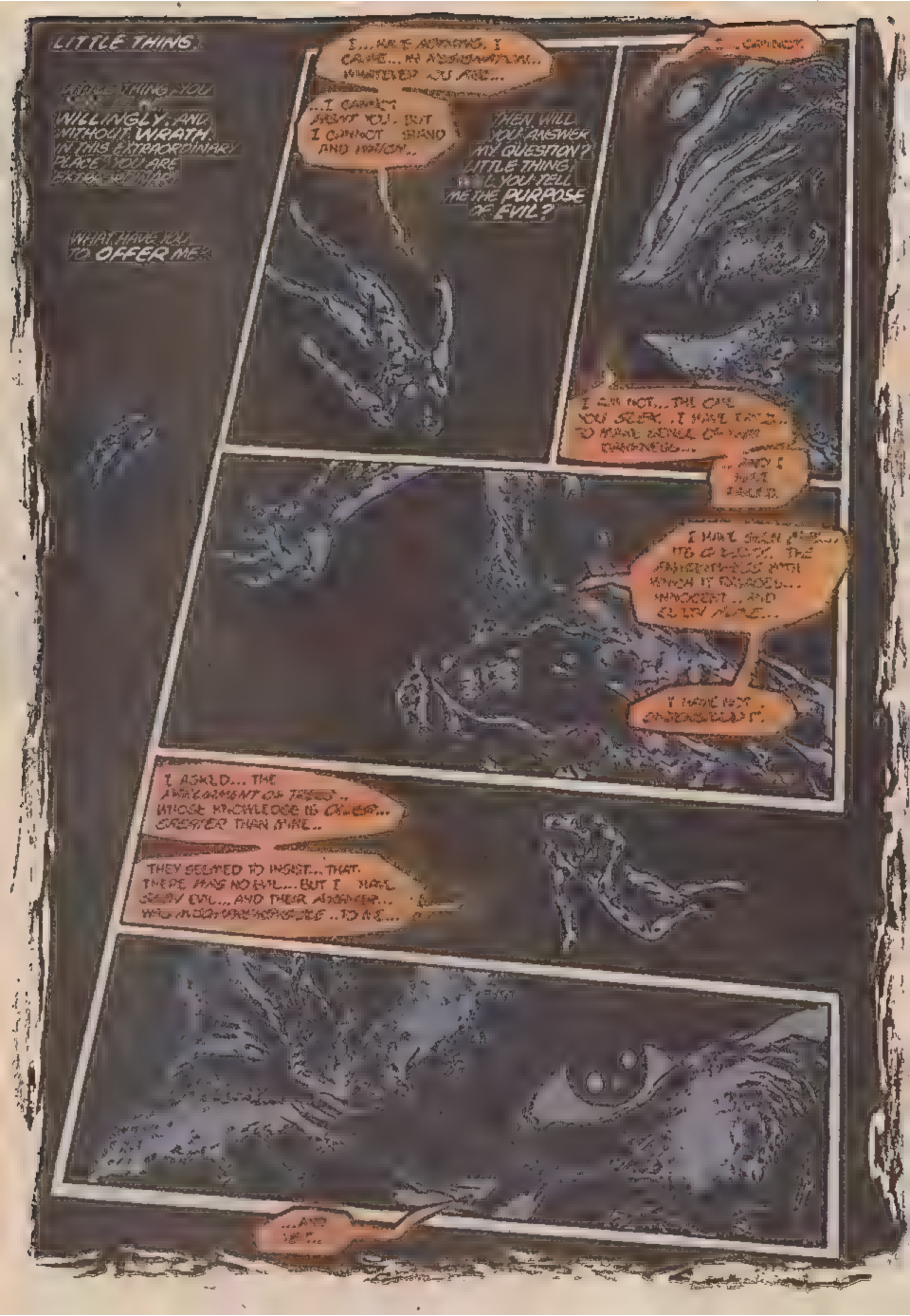
"HE. .HE'S WITH THE STRANGER. THEY'RE GAZING UP AT THE APPROACHING CREATURE...

"THE STRANGER.. HE'S SO UNCERTAIN, INSIDE HIMSELF. HE'S SHAKING HIS HEAD, TURNING AWAY.. HE SEEMS ALMOST AFRAID..

"BUT... BUT THE SWAMP THING. HE'S WALKING TOWARDS IT, TOWARDS THE WALL OF BLACKNESS.

"HE... JOHN, HE'S GOING TO MEET IT. HE'S GOING...

"GONE."


LITTLE THING.
WILLINGLY, AND WITHOUT WRATH. IN THIS EXTRAORDINARY PLACE YOU ARE
WHAT HAVE YOU TO OFFER ME?
I... HAVE NOTHING. I CAME... IN ASSIGNATION... WHATEVER YOU ARE...
...I CANNOT AIDS YOU. BUT I CANNOT SHAND AND WATCH...
THEN WILL YOU ANSWER MY QUESTION? LITTLE THING, WILL YOU TELL ME THE PURPOSE OF EVIL?
I AM NOT... THE ONE YOU SEEK. I HAVE TRIED... TO MAKE SENSE OF YOUR DARKNESS...
I HAVE SEEN ... THE ... WHICH IT PARADES... INNOCENT... AND EVILLY ALONE...
I HAVE NOT ...
I ASKED... THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES... WHOSE KNOWLEDGE IS OLDER... GREATER THAN MINE...
THEY SEEMED TO INSIST... THAT THERE WAS NO EVIL... BUT I HAVE SEEN EVIL... AND THEIR ANSWER... WAS MOCKERY ... TO ME...
...AND YET...

AND YET... THEY SPOKE OF APHIDS EATING LEAVES... BUGS EATING APHIDS... THEMSELVES FINALLY DEVOURED BY THE SOIL... FEEDING THE FOLIAGE.

THEY ASKED... WHERE EVIL DWELLED... WITHIN THIS CYCLE... AND TOLD ME... TO LOOK... TO THE SOIL...

THE BLACK SOIL... IS RICH IN FOUL DECAY, YET GLORIOUS LIFE... SPRINGS FROM IT...

BUT HOWEVER DAZZLING... THE FLOURISHES OF LIFE... IN THE END... ALL DECAYS... TO THE SAME BLACK HUMUS...

PERHAPS...

PERHAPS EVIL... IS THE HUMUS... FORMED BY VIRTUE'S DECAY... AND PERHAPS...

...PERHAPS IT IS FROM... THAT DARK, SINISTER LOAM... THAT VIRTUE GROWS STRONGEST?

I... DO NOT KNOW. I DO NOT KNOW... WHAT THEY MEANT...

I SEE

LITTLE THING

LITTLE THING, I SENSE A GREAT AND FINAL END APPROACHING. I WOULD BE ALONE

LEAVE FREELY AS YOU CAME

"THE SWAMP THING... HE JUST WALKED OUT OF THAT CREATURE UNHARMED. WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT HAPPENED WHILE HE WAS INSIDE?

"DOESN'T MATTER... DIDN'T DO ANY GOOD... THE HORROR'S CARRYING ON... ROLLING TOWARDS HEAVEN..."

I... I THINK THIS IS IT! IT'S ALMOST AT THE EDGE OF THE LIGHTED REGION OUR ALLIES HAVE BEEN DEFENDING...

IT'LL CRUSH IT. THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO STAND IN ITS WAY...

"I CAN SEE ETRIGAN. HE'S CONSCIOUS AGAIN. AND THERE'RE THE TWO SURVIVING DEMON BROTHERS

"THEY ALL LOOK AS SCARED AS EACH OTHER. THEY'RE WAITING FOR THE BANG...

"THE SPECTRE'S WEEPING... HE'S ASKING GOD TO FORGIVE HIM HIS FAILURE..

"TOO LATE.

"ALL TOO LATE."

FROM THE LIGHT NOW... THERE'S SOMETHING COMING. SOMETHING AS BIG AS THE DARKNESS. IT'S...

NO. NO, I CAN'T WATCH THIS. NOT MEANT TO...

"...AND THE BLACK THING... RISING UP TO MEET IT... TO FIGHT IT...

"THE SHELL OF BONE COVERING THE BACK OF THE CREATURE...IT LOOKS...IT LOOKS LIKE...

"OH, NO. NO NO NO NO."

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

I KNOW! I KNOW WHAT IT IS! I KNOW WHAT THE SHELL IS! I KNOW WHAT THESE TOWERS WERE THAT CRUSHED THE SPECTRE! I KNOW!

OH, GODDDDD..

DAYTON ...HOLD ON...

"THE DARKNESS HAS LIFTED... WAY UP ABOVE... CAN SEE IT NOW. OH, YES.

"SEE IT ALL...

"IT'S REACHING TOWARDS HEAVEN.

"AND, AND SOMETHING BRIGHT. SOMETHING BRIGHT IS REACHING OUT FROM HEAVEN TOWARDS THE DARKNESS..."

THE LIGHT.. THE DARK.. THEY'RE GOING TO FIGHT.. EVERYTHING WILL BE DESTROYED..

THEY'RE ALMOST TOUCHING... THEY'RE...

THEY'RE.. THEY'RE CLASPING! FLOWING.. RUNNING TOGETHER.

EVERYTHING SWIRLING... EVERYONE FALLING...

I CAN SEE IT...

"I CAN SEE IT ALL.

"NO. DOESN'T MAKE... SENSE..."

SPAK! FZAT

I DON'T UNDERSTAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

OH, GOD...

OH, GOD, IS IT OVER...?

I..I DON'T KNOW. THE POWER SEEMS TO HAVE DISCHARGED ITSELF I THINK WE CAN RELEASE EACH OTHERS' HANDS NOW...

I DON'T BELIEVE IT, WE DID IT! WE'RE STILL HERE...

NOT ALL OF US, CONSTANTINE

SOME OF US ARE DEAD..

SOME OF US ARE GONE.

ITS SHELL... I SAW... KNOW WHAT IT WAS... I KNOW...

BUT THEN, THERE ARE ALWAYS CASUALTIES IN A WAR LIKE THIS. I KNOW. YOU FOUGHT A GOOD CAMPAIGN, CONSTANTINE. YOU HAVE MY RESPECT...

...THOUGH I'M UNSURE AS TO THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR VICTORY.

VICTORY? I DON'T THINK IT WAS A VICTORY, BARON...

...MORE OF A NO-SCORE DRAW.

A FINGERNAIL... HAHAHAHAHA... I SAW IT...

BIG GUY?

YOU AWAKE?

DEADMAN..? WHAT HAPPENED...?

I DUNNO. AFTER THE GROUND DISAPPEARED I WAS JUST FALLING AND SCREAMING ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE.

THINGS SEEM QUIET NOW, THOUGH. I SAW FATE AND THE SPECTRE LEAVE A WHILE BACK. GUESS ETRIGAN DID TOO.

BUT.. THE DARKNESS. AND THAT BLINDING HAND.. REACHING OUT FROM HEAVEN. THEY'RE BOTH GONE

NO. NOT GONE. THE LIGHT AND SHADE ARE STILL EVERYWHERE ABOUT US..

..ONLY THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THEM HAS ALTERED.

STRANGER? I. DO NOT UNDERSTAND...

WHAT HAS.. HAPPENED? HERE...?

HAPPENED? NOTHING HAS HAPPENED. EVERYTHING HAS HAPPENED

CAN'T YOU FEEL IT? EVERYWHERE THINGS LOOK THE SAME, BUT THE FEELING... THE FEELING IS DIFFERENT.

YEAH... YOU'RE RIGHT. EVERYTHING'S SHARPER, MORE DISTINCT, LIKE THE AIR AFTER A STORM...

A STORM THAT HAD BEEN BREWING SINCE THE UNIVERSE WAS FORMED.

PERHAPS THE ATMOSPHERE HAD GROWN MORE CHARGED AND OPPRESSIVE THAN WE REALIZED.

CONTINUED ON 4TH PAGE FOLLOWING

BUT THE *NATURE* OF GOOD . THE *NATURE* OF EVIL... *THEY* HAVE NOT CHANGED?

PERHAPS *NOT*. BUT I SUSPECT A DIFFERENT *LIGHT* HAS BEEN CAST UPON THEIR *RELATIONSHIP*

IN THE HEART OF *DARKNESS*, A *FLOWER* BLOSSOMS, *ENRICHING* THE SHADOWS WITH ITS PROMISE OF *HOPE*..

IN THE FIELDS OF *LIGHT*, AN *ADDER* COILS, AND THE RADIANT TRANQUILLITY IS LENT *SAVOR* BY ITS SINISTER *PRESENCE*.

RIGHT AND WRONG, BLACK AND WHITE, GOOD AND EVIL..

ALL MY *EXISTENCE* I HAVE LOOKED FROM *ONE* TO THE *OTHER*, FULLY EMBRACING *NEITHER ONE*...

NEVER BEFORE HAVE I UNDERSTOOD HOW MUCH THEY *DEPEND* UPON EACH OTHER.

AND *AFTER* THE EVENTS OF THIS DAY. . WHAT *THEN* ?

SURELY... THINGS MUST *CHANGE*. . ?

YEAH, I GUESS SO..

...AFTER *ALL*, THEY USUALLY *DO*.

THEY'RE LEAVING IT'S ALL OVER. PERHAPS NOW WE'LL GET SOME PEACE.

B-BUT... YOU HEARD WHAT THEY SAID, ABOUT EVERYTHING BEING DIFFERENT...

TH-THEY SPOKE AS IF GOOD AND EVIL DIDN'T MEAN THE SAME THINGS ANYMORE...

SO? WHO CARES? THEY'RE STILL THERE, AREN'T THEY?

NOW COME ON. WATCHING A MOLLUSK LIKE YOU TRYING TO GRASP METAPHYSICS IS PROFOUNDLY IRRITATING.

BUT... BUT DON'T YOU SEE? NEARLY ALL OUR STORIES REVOLVE AROUND GOOD STRUGGLING AGAINST EVIL... DARKNESS AGAINST LIGHT...

WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE STORIES? WITHOUT THAT ANCIENT CONFLICT TO FALL BACK ON, WHAT WILL THEY BE ABOUT?

BROTHER, PLEASE...

DON'T WORRY YOURSELF ABOUT IT

I'M SURE WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING.

NEXT: HOME FREE

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
SWAMP THING
51
75¢
CAN 95¢
UK 40p
AUG 86
HAWKMAN
is back!
by ALAN MOORE, RICK VEITCH & ALFREDO ALCALA

GOING DOWN-HILL (!):

HEY.. THOSE MISTS UP AHEAD! WE'RE ALMOST HOME!

THE SPHERES ABOUT US HAVE SUBTLY *CHANGED* SINCE THE CATACLISMIC MEETING OF *DARK* AND *LIGHT*.

I MUST INSPECT THE *TERRITORIES* AND SEE THAT EVERYTHING IS IN ITS PLACE.

WHAT OF YOU? WHERE WILL *YOU* GO?

I DUNNO.

SOME OF US HAVE *HOMES*, BOSTON BRAND. *OTHERS* SIMPLY KEEP *WALKING*.

FOR *MY* PART, I MUST LEAVE YOU, HERE ON HEAVEN'S WESTERNMOST *SLOPES*..

THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH THIS PLACE ON A *SATURDAY* NIGHT..

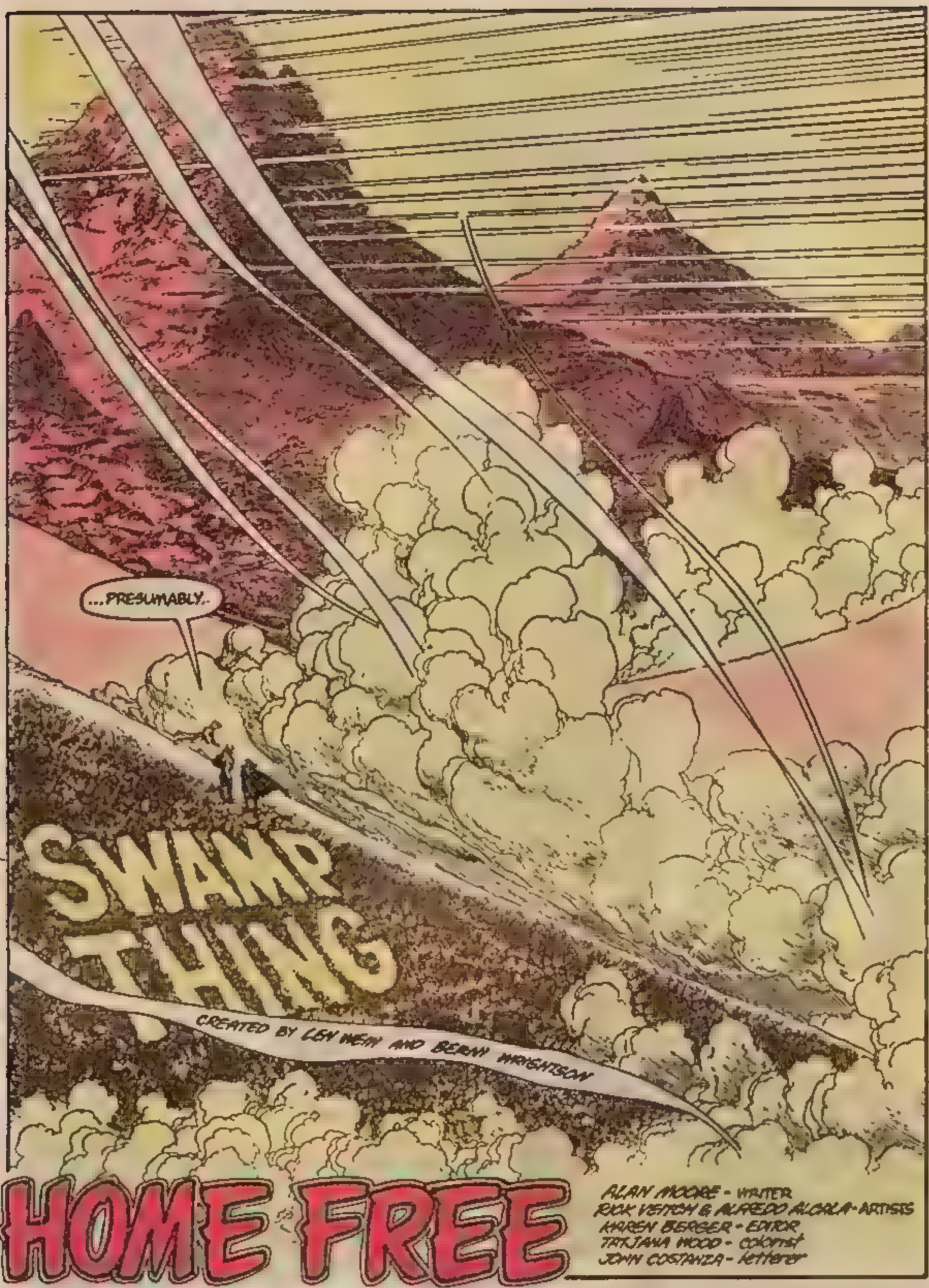
IT'S KINDA *DEAD*

FOR *MY* PART... I MUST RETURN... TO MY *WIFE*...

HEY, LIGHTEN *UP*, WILLYA?, WE MADE IT! THE WAR'S *OVER*, YOUR WOMAN'S *WAITING* FOR YOU, *RAMA KUSHNA'S* IN HER HEAVEN, AND ALL'S *RIGHT* WITH THE WORLD!

DAYS LIKE *THIS*, IT'S GOOD TO BE *ALIVE*..

WE HAVE BEEN *SEPARATED*... FOR TOO *LONG*.. AND WHEN THE *SADDAM*... WAS AT ITS *WORST*... I FEARED.., I WOULD NOT *SEE* HER AGAIN.



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GOING DOWN-HILL (2):

FISH STICKS!

IF I HADN'T BEEN TALKING THROUGH GRITTED TEETH, THAT STOKE DETECTIVE NEVER WOULDA SUSPECTED!

WHAT?

I ALREADY TOLD JA: FISH STICKS. SIX BOXES OF FROZEN FISH STICKS HIDDEN DOWN MY TOP BOY, THEY WERE COLD!

YOU IN FER HOOKIN', OR WHAT?

NO! NO, I'M NOT!

OKAY, OKAY! NO NEED TO TWIST YOUR PANTY HOSE. I JUST THOUGHT WITH THAT DYED HAIR YOU LOOKED LIKE A HOOKER IS ALL.

SO WHAT DID THEY BUST YOU FOR?

HUGGING VEGETABLES.

SOMEWHERE, OUT OF MY FIELD OF VISION, AN INVISIBLE CLOCK IS TICKING. AFTER LISTENING TO IT FOR SEVEN HOURS, I'M ALLOWED TO SEE THE PUBLIC DEFENDER...

IT ISN'T WORTH THE WAIT.

SMOKE?

NO, I DON'T

REALLY? WELL, I'D ADVISE YOU TO START. YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE.

NOW, SINCE IT'S POINTLESS DENYING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS, UH .. THIS CREATURE, MAYBE WE SHOULD GO FOR THE CANNIBALISM VICTIM APPROACH..

WHAT?

WELL, OBVIOUSLY, YOU WERE FORCED INTO A REPULSIVE RELATIONSHIP BY THIS MONSTER IF WE MAINTAIN...

NO! NO, I WASN'T! I WON'T SAY THAT! IT WAS ME WHO WENT TO HIM!

MRS CARLE STICK WITH THAT LINE AT YOUR BOND HEARING THIS AFTERNOON AND YOU'LL GO DOWN IN FLAMES, BELIEVE ME.

BUT IT'S THE TRUTH! LOOK, THIS IS INSANE. WHAT AM I BEING CHARGED WITH?

WELL, SINCE YOU ASKED, YOU'RE BEING CHARGED UNDER THOSE LAWS OF THIS STATE USUALLY RESERVED FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE CARNAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH FARM ANIMALS

THE FRICKIN NAME OF THE OFFENSE IS "CRIMES AGAINST NATURE."

"CRIMES AGAINST NATURE."

I THINK OF HIS DELICATE FERNS BETWEEN MY FINGERS, HIS SCENTED MOSS AGAINST MY CHEEK, AND I BEGIN TO LAUGH.

IT'S GOOD TO KNOW I STILL CAN IT'S A SIGN OF NORMALITY..

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

.. A SIGN OF LIFE...
WELL, HERE WE ARE THE REGION OF THE JUST DEAD.
I GUESS HERE'S WHERE WE SAY GOOD-BYE I HAVE BUSINESS IN NANDA PARABAT AND YOU'VE GOT YOUR LITTLE PIECE OF 98.6 HEAVEN WAITING FOR YOU.
Y'KNOW, YOU'RE A LUCKY STIFF.
AND BELIEVE ME, I KNOW FROM STIFFS, LUCKY OR OTHERWISE. IN FACT..
HEY! YOU! I GOT A BONE TO PICK WITH YOU PEOPLE!
BONES ARE ALL THAT'S LEFT, PAL NOW, WHAT..
HEY, DON'T I RECOGNIZE YOU?
YOU OUGHTA! YOU MADE ME GO BACK TO EARTH WHEN THEY RESUSCITATED ME AFTER MY HEART ATTACK!
SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK HERE? IF THEY RESUSCITATED YOU...
HAH! THEY SURE DID! THEN THEY INSISTED ON DRIVING ME TO THE HOSPITAL TO MAKE SURE I WAS OKAY, AND ON THE FREEWAY THE BRAKES FAILED!
IT'S A DISGRACE!
I MEAN, IS THIS ANY WAY TO RUN AN AFTERLIFE?
LISTEN, I'M ONLY A VOLUNTARY WORKER I DON'T MAKE POLICY. YOU OUGHTA TAKE THIS UP WITH THE GUYS IN THE FATE AND DESTINY DEPARTMENT.

"...I'M SURE THEY'LL GIVE YOUR CASE A FAIR HEARING."

;HMMM:

MRS. CABLE, FRANKLY, I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO MAKE OF THIS.

THE *POLICE* HAVE INFORMED ME THAT THEY HAVE EVIDENCE THAT YOU HAVE CONSORTED WITH A GENUINE *NON-HUMAN ORGANISM* THIS IS *UNBELIEVABLE*

BUT SINCE YOU'VE APPARENTLY REFUSED CONSISTENTLY TO *DENY* IT, I HAVE NO CHOICE OTHER THAN TO TAKE THIS SORDID AFFAIR AT *FACE VALUE.*

I *ALSO* HAVE TO CONSIDER THE FACT THAT YOU WORK WITH *CHILDREN*...

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING?* THAT I CAN'T BE TRUSTED WITH *KIDS?*

MRS. CABLE...

YOU'RE SAYING I'M SOME SORT OF *CHILD MOLESTER* OR SOMETHING?

MRS. CABLE. I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* YOU ARE, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S ANYTHING I'D CARE TO EXPOSE *MY OWN* CHILDREN TO.

BAIL'S FIFTEEN THOUSAND. DON'T LEAVE TOWN BEFORE YOUR *PRELIMINARY HEARING.*

THAT'S ALL.

THAT'S ALL? FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS IS ALL?

I DON'T HAVE FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS...

...I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY WHO HAS FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!

WHAT?

CABLE?

COME ON... UP AN' OUT. SOME PUBLIC-SPIRITED SOUL DECIDED TO PUT UP BAIL AND TURN YOU LOOSE ON THE COMMUNITY AGAIN.

BUT WHO...?

BEATS ME, BUT IF I HAD MY DRUTHERS, THEY'D BE IN HERE WITH YOU 'STEAD O' YOU BEIN' OUT THERE WITH THEM.

NOW MOVE IT!

THEY'RE RIGHT THROUGH HERE...

D-DEANNA? I...

SAVE IT. YOU KEPT THINGS FROM ME AND YOU'VE DAMAGED MY HOME'S REPUTATION, MAYBE BEYOND REPAIR...

...BUT YOU WERE GOOD WITH THE KIDS. THAT'S WHY I RAISED BAIL. NOW WE'RE QUITS.

GOOD-BYE, ABBY.

DEANNA WALKS AWAY, AND THE SENSE OF OUTRAGE THAT'S KEPT ME GOING LEAVES WITH HER. I'VE MESSED THINGS UP. SHE DOESN'T LIKE ME.

INSTEAD OF ANGER THERE'S A STONE IN MY STOMACH, GRADUALLY DRAGGING ME DOWN...

...DOWN TO EARTH.

FROM A PLACE... OF SMOLDERING OPAL FOG.. FROM THE REGION... OF THE JUST DEAD.. I DESCEND... TO THE REALM... OF THE QUICK...

THE COOL... ETHEREAL WHITE... GIVES WAY TO GREEN... WARM AND VIBRANT...

... AND I... AM IN THE WEB .. OF THE WORLD.. ONCE MORE.

AS THE COMFORTING EMBRACE... OF THE ROOTS SURROUNDS ME... I DETECT IN THOSE FIBERS.. A SENSE OF DORMANCY... AND REPOSE...

IS IT AUTUMN ALREADY?

EAGERLY SEIZING SUBSTANCE.. FROM THE PLANET'S RICH... AND GENEROUS FLESH... I BURST UP FROM THE DARK... THE WORLD OF DEAD MEN.. GROWING LUNGS TO TASTE... THE SMOKED FALL AIR..

I AM ALONE. THIS MOMENT IS MINE...

MINE ALONE.

CONTINUED ON 53RD PAGE FOLLOWING

ALONE.

THE WORD HITS ME, THE EMPTY, ACHING FACT OF IT HITS ME AS SOON AS I'M BACK ON THE STREETS. EVERYWHERE THERE IS A HOSTILE, UNFORGIVING SILENCE

A LOUISIANA SILENCE.

STOPPING FOR GROCERIES I MEET A COUPLE I KNOW. THE WOMAN OPENS HER MOUTH TO SPEAK, BUT HER HUSBAND PULLS HER AWAY

CHEEKS BURNING, I HURRY HOME, BUT WHEN I GET THERE THE SILENCE IS WAITING FOR ME; COLD, REPROACHFUL...

...INVIOLATE

BRRRING

HELLO?

YES, THIS IS ABBY CABLE. WHO...?

EXCUSE ME? DO I LIKE WHAT?

EUUHGH

HE MAKES TWO MORE CALLS, EACH MORE PORNOGRAPHIC THAN THE ONE BEFORE. AFTER THAT I LEAVE THE PHONE OFF THE HOOK..

...AND PUT A CHAIN ON MY DOOR...

...AND THINK ABOUT HOW GOOD IT IS TO BE OUT OF JAIL.

I DON'T GO OUT OF DOORS MUCH UNTIL I'M CALLED FOR MY PRELIMINARY HEARING.

LOUISIANA SUPERIOR COURT PARISH, LA 70457

MRS ABIGAL CA
1318 PINEY ST
HOUMA, LA 70

CERTIFIED

THIS IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE PROBABLE CAUSE HEARING, AND I'M CONFUSED UNTIL I FIND OUT THAT THEY'RE THE SAME THING.

THE PARRISH COURT JUDGE HAS TO WORK OUT THE PROBABLE CAUSE OF THE CRIME AND THEN DECIDE IF THERE'S ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO GO TO THE GRAND JURY.

THE CRIME IS HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH A MONSTER.

I COULD TELL THEM THAT THE PROBABLE CAUSE OF THE CRIME WAS THAT I WAS IN LOVE WITH HIM...

...BUT THEY DON'T ASK ME.

QUICKLY AND PREDICTABLY, THE JUDGE RECOMMENDS MY CASE TO THE GRAND JURY AND THEN IT'S OVER. ON THE WAY OUT, I'M SURROUNDED BY REPORTERS...

MRS. CABLE? IS IT TRUE THAT YOUR HUSBAND'S ON A LIFE SUPPORT?

YOU MEAN MATT? YES, HE ..HE HAD A CAR ACCIDENT...

REALLY? AND WOULD HE APPROVE OF YOUR NEW RELATIONSHIP?

MS CABLE? WANDA FRY, FROM THE COURIER. IS THE SHRIMP MONSTER, UH, ANATOMICALLY COMPLETE?

"IS IT TRUE YOU'RE PREGNANT?"... "WILL YOU GO ON WORKING WITH CHILDREN?"... "IS YOUR HAIR NATURAL?"... A BARRAGE OF QUESTIONS AND FLASHBULBS.

ALEC, I DON'T THINK I CAN TAKE THIS.

ALEC, WHERE ARE YOU?

AH.

THERE YOU ARE.

CONSTANTINE...? I HOPE.. THAT YOU HAVE NOT COME... WITH MORE QUESTIONS AND EXCLAMATIONS.

I AM ALONE.. AND ALL MY PHASES.. ARE OVER

COULDN'T AGREE MORE, MATE.

I JUST CALLED BY TO PAY MY RESPECTS BEFORE FLYING BACK TO ENGLAND.

THE PHONE, LIGHTS, AND WATER WILL BE DISCONNECTED AND THERE'LL BE SOMETHING NASTY EVOLVING IN THE FRIDGE, BUT WHO CARES?

IT'S HOME, ENNIT?

MMMM, I WANTED TO THANK YOU. I KNOW I'VE LED YOU ON A BIT...

YOU LED ME ACROSS AMERICA..

AHH. WHEN YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME OF THE BOUDICCA ..IMMEDIATELY..?

WOULD YOU HAVE BELIEVED ME? AND IF WE'D TACKLED THE BOUDICCA AND THEY'D STILL AWAKENED THE DARKNESS, COULD YOU HAVE FACED IT BACK THEN?

NO, YOU ARE RIGHT..

HOW.. DID YEAR. BATTLE GO..?

TOUGH: ZATARA, DEAD, SAMSON DEAD, MISTO DERANGED.

ADD ON ARMAN, JUDITH, EMMA, SISTER ANNE-MARIE, BEN COX AND HIS MOTHER AND THIS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE AN EXPENSIVE OLD DO.

A VERY EXPENSIVE OLD DO.

YOU KNEW THE DANGERS. THAT MANY OF YOUR COMRADES WOULD NOT SURVIVE.

I DID WHAT I HAD TO.

PERHAPS. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT...?

HOW DO YOU THINK?

LISTEN, I'M FED UP OF TALKING ABOUT ME. WHAT DID YOU GET OUT OF ALL THIS?

I LEARNED.. MUCH TO CONSIDER

THE NATURE OF GOOD AND EVIL. THE ADVICE OF THE ARCHANGEL OF TREES. THAT SEEMED SO USELESS.. YET PROVED SO NECESSARY.

ME? I'M JUST AN ORDINARY PERSON WITH ORDINARY NEEDS: FOOD, SHELTER, SLEEP, SEX, RECREATION, AND A SAFE WORLD TO ENJOY IT ALL IN

THAT'S ALL MOST ORDINARY PEOPLE WANT, ALL US POOR, UNCOMPLICATED BUGGERS.

WE'RE HARMLESS.

IT'S ALL THE EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE WHO ARE DANGEROUS.

THE ONES WHO WAKE UP THINKING "WILL I CONQUER EUROPE TODAY?" INSTEAD OF "WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST?" THAT SORT NEEDS WATCHING.

BUT ALSO. I MUST CONSIDER YOU.

CONSTANTINE. WHO ARE YOU?

IT'S LIKE THE PARLIAMENT WARNED YOU. "AVOID POWER.. AVOID ANGER."

THEIR WAGINGS CANNOT BE REVIED.. BUT IN MY CASE AT LEAST... IT WAS UNNECESSARY.

THE WAR IS OVER.. I AM HOME AT LAST...

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY. ANGER ME NOW...?

GET OUT AND GO TO RUSSIA. YOU ARE SICK!!

Dear Mrs Cable,
I have prayed the Lord to forgive you, but you have displayed such a beast, and an abomination in his sight...

ELYSIUM LAWNS

DEAR ABIGAIL.
IN LIGHT OF RECENT EVENTS, I MUST INFORM WITH REGRET THAT YOUR SERVICES ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED

DEAR NORDIC FROST GODDESS!
I HAVE SEEN YOUR PICTURE IN THE NEWS. ARE YOU INTO S&M?

DEER Slut
What is the matter you cannot get a reel man so you have intercourse with anything it is to bad your husband is in a comma he wood wup yur ass you are an ugly pig...

LOUISIANA SUPERIOR COURT
PARRISH, LA 70601

DEAR MS CABLE,
THE GRAND JURY HAS SET THE FOLLOWING DATES FOR YOUR ARRAIGNMENT. IF FOR ANY REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE NOTIFY THIS OFFICE IMMEDIATELY.

DEAR DEANNA,
THIS IS KILLING ME AND I CAN'T STAND IT. I'M LEAVING. THERE'S A CHECK ENCLOSED. EVEN ALONG WITH THE PAY I'M DUE FROM ELYSIUM LAWNS IT WON'T COVER MY BAIL, BUT I'LL PAY OFF THE REST WHEN I CAN. I PROM SE.

I'M SORRY,
ABBY CABLE

I PACK EVERYTHING I CAN'T BEAR TO LEAVE, THEN TAKE AGES TYING MY HEAD SCARF SO THAT IT HIDES MY STUPID HAIR.

I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE "HERE I AM. PLEASE ARREST ME" TATTOOED ON MY FOREHEAD.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS. I'M JUMPING BAIL. I'M A FUGITIVE. I'M ON THE RUN..

I REACH THE GREYHOUND STATION AND REALIZE I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHERE I'M RUNNING TO

PLATE 23

Peter Pan

WHERE DO RUNAWAYS GO? THEY GO TO THE BIG CITY.. SOMEPLACE LIKE NEW YORK OR METROPOLIS...

GRAVE PORT

AND GET HOOKED ON JUNK OR SOLD INTO PROSTITUTION.

NO. NOT ME. I'VE HANDLED WORSE MONSTERS THAN THE CITY HAS TO OFFER.

FINALLY, I CHOOSE A BUS, BUY A TICKET, AND TAKE A SEAT. THE OLD MAN NEXT TO ME GLANCES AT ME ONCE THEN STARES OUT OF THE WINDOW.

HE GOES EATING BREATH MINTS, ONE AFTER ANOTHER, PACKET AFTER PACKET...

WHEN THE BUS DRIVER STARTS THE ENGINE I FEEL A WAVE OF RELIEF. I HAVE TO GET OUT OF LOUISIANA BEFORE ALL THOSE SMALL-TOWN VALUES PILE UP AND CRUSH ME.

I NEED SOMEPLACE BIG.

A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN GET LOST.

GOTHAM CITY

HERE WE ARE, THEN.

THE END OF THE ROAD.

HOUMA 2 M

CONSTANTINE .. BEFORE YOU GO.. I SHOULD TELL YOU.. THAT THERE ARE.. FEW HUMAN BEINGS WHO

DON'T SAY IT, MATE. DON'T SAY ANYTHING NICE TO ME.

I'D HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING NICE BACK AND RUIN MY IMAGE.

BESIDES, I'VE GOT THIS REALLY ACE JOKE I'VE BEEN DYING TO TELL YOU...

"HOW DO YOU BAFFLE A VEGETABLE?"

JOKES, CONSTANTINE ? AFTER ALL . . . THAT WE HAVE SEEN..?

VERY WELL .. ONCE MORE . I SHALL PERMIT YOU . TO USE ME . AS A STANDING MAN

I GIVE UP.

HOW DO YOU BAFFLE A VEGETABLE ?

GONE.

MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, MY LOVER..

SO IS THIS IT, THEN? IS THIS THE PLACE THAT LIFE WAS LEADING TO?

DOES EVERYBODY, SOONER OR LATER, SOMEDAY OR OTHER, END UP HERE?

HERE IN THE DARK CITY?

PEEP .25

I SHOULDN'T HAVE CHOSEN THIS PLACE. I SHOULD HAVE GONE TO METROPOLIS, NEW YORK, SOME-PLACE WITHOUT SO MANY SHADOWS.

GIANT EXPO GOTHAM DESIGN

GOTHAM HAS A REPUTATION. IT ISN'T LIKE THOSE OTHER PLACES.

THE BUILDINGS, HUGE BLOCKS OF LIGHT, LOOK STRANDED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 1930 AND 2001, ART DECO SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH FACELESS STEEL AND GLASS..

WHEN I WAS A KID, I THOUGHT HEAVEN LOOKED LIKE THIS.

BUT THEN YOU READ ABOUT GOTHAM'S CRIMINALS, ALL DEFORMED OR INSANE, AND YOU REALIZE THAT'S JUST THE SURFACE.

UNDER ALL THAT STYLE AND CIVILIZATION THERE'S A ZOO FULL OF DICK TRACY'S NIGHTMARES YAMMERING TO GET OUT.

MEGA-BUCKS LOTTERY

OH, GOD, WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP IN THIS PLACE.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

BUT SINCE I GUESS I HAVE TO, MAYBE I SHOULD ASK ONE OF THE NATIVES FOR DIRECTIONS.

UH, EXCUSE ME..?

HUH? WHAT...?

OH, JEEZ, THAT'S *GREAT!* HOW YA GET IT LOOKIN' LIKE *THAT?* EVERY TIME I USE BLEACH IT JUST FRIZZES UP, I LOOK LIKE AN *EXPERIMENT*

HEY, LAVERNE! LOOKA THIS!

GREAT GOD, IT'S SNOW *WHITE!* WHERE'S ALL THE *LITTLE* GUYS WITH THE *LANTERNS?*

HAHAHA! NO, SHE'S *KIDDING*, YOU LOOK *FABULOUS*

UH, LOOK, I JUST WANTED TO ASK IF THERE'S A GOOD PLACE TO GET A *ROOM* AROUND HERE...

WELL, LISSEN, MY BEST ADVICE IS TO FIND A REAL FAT, CONTENTED-LOOKIN' *COCKROACH* AND *FOLLOW* HIM.

HA HA HA!

WELL, RAISE MY RENT.

LAVERNE?

VWOOP VWOOP VWOOP

WE GOT COMPANY

VWOOP VWOOP VWOOP

OKAY, LADIES, STAY WHERE YOU ARE UNTIL YOU'RE ASKED TO APPROACH THE VEHICLE...

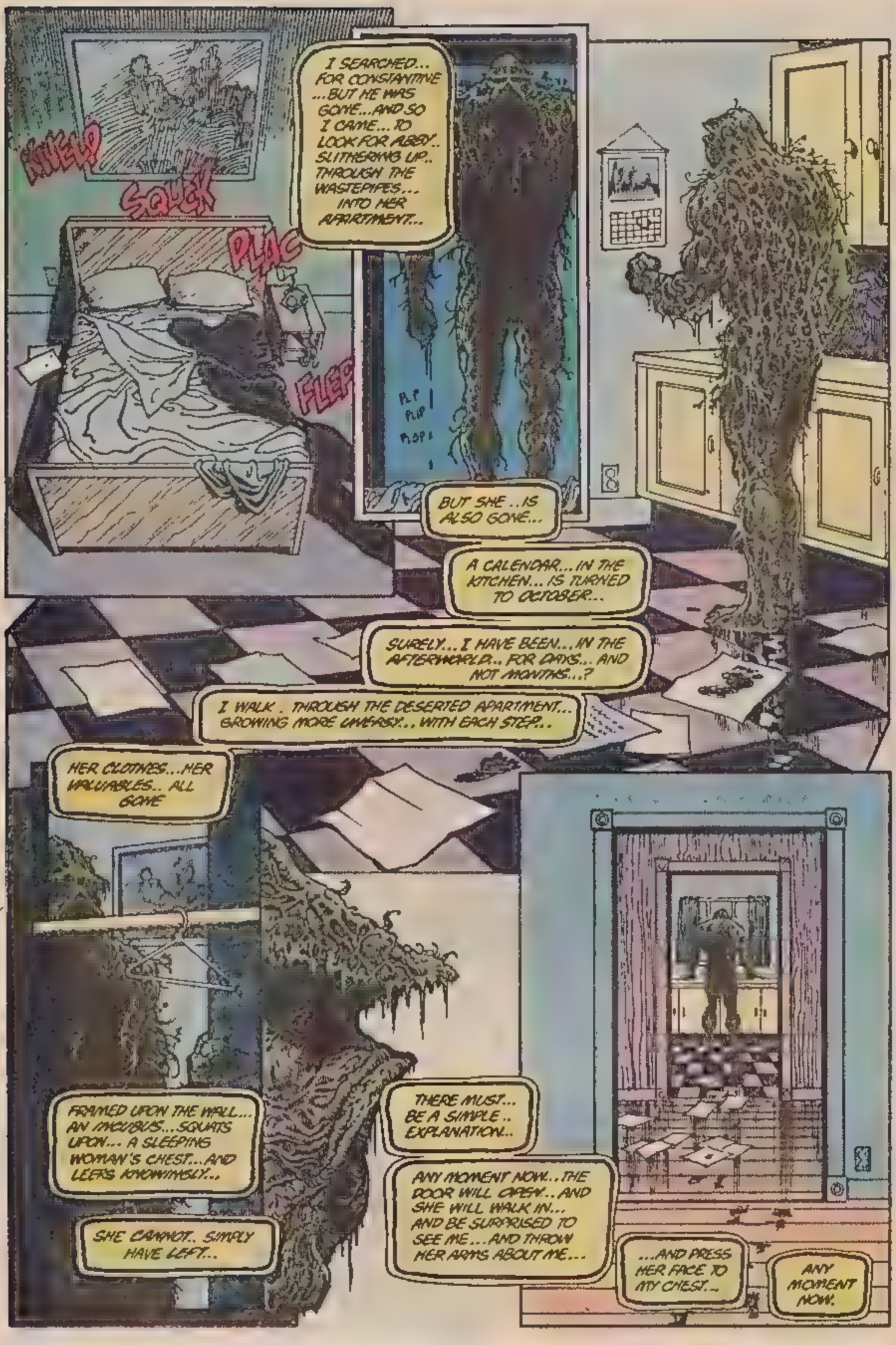
VWOOP

POLICE

I START TO MOVE AWAY AND A MAN SHOUTS SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND THROUGH A BULLHORN. IT SOUNDS LIKE "STAPLE YOUR ASS."

GOTHAM CITY VICE SQUAD

MY CHEST THUDS HOLLOW SUDDENLY I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I'LL BE SLEEPING TONIGHT


KNELP
SQUCK
PLAC
FLEP
I SEARCHED... FOR CONSTANTINE ...BUT HE WAS GONE...AND SO I CAME... TO LOOK FOR ABBY.. SLITHERING UP.. THROUGH THE WASTEPIPES... INTO HER APARTMENT...
PLIP PLIP PLOP
BUT SHE ..IS ALSO GONE...
A CALENDAR...IN THE KITCHEN... IS TURNED TO OCTOBER...
SURELY... I HAVE BEEN... IN THE AFTERWORLD.. FOR DAYS... AND NOT MONTHS...?
I WALK . THROUGH THE DESERTED APARTMENT... GROWING MORE UNEASY... WITH EACH STEP...
HER CLOTHES...HER VALUABLES.. ALL GONE
FRAMED UPON THE WALL... AN INCUBUS...SQUATS UPON... A SLEEPING WOMAN'S CHEST...AND LEERS KNOWINGLY...
SHE CANNOT.. SIMPLY HAVE LEFT...
THERE MUST... BE A SIMPLE .. EXPLANATION...
ANY MOMENT NOW...THE DOOR WILL OPEN...AND SHE WILL WALK IN... AND BE SURPRISED TO SEE ME...AND THROW HER ARMS ABOUT ME...
...AND PRESS HER FACE TO MY CHEST...
ANY MOMENT NOW.

ANY MINUTE NOW, Y'KNOW, HE'S GONNA BE IN HERE SHOUTIN' ABOUT HIS *BITCHES*.

YEAH, I KNOW WELL, JUST SO LONG AS HE BAILS US OUT QUICKER'N *LAST TIME* IS ALL...

MRS. CABLE?

CABLE? SHE SAID HER NAME WAS *HOLLAND!* HOW COME *SHE* GETS OUT *FIRST?* DIDN'T *FLOYD* SHOW YET?

NOT A *HAIR*, LAVERNE.

BUT DON'T FEEL *BAD*, MRS. CABLE AIN'T GETTING *OUT* SHE S HELPING WITH *INQUIRIES*

"MRS. CABLE," SHE SAID

THEY KNOW!

I'M TAKEN BEFORE A MAN WITH EGG ON HIS LAPEL AND BREATH THAT HITS YOU FROM RIGHT ACROSS THE DESK.

BULLOCK

HIS NAME'S BULLOCK HE TELLS ME THAT MY NAME S ABIGAIL CABLE.

I DON'T SAY ANYTHING.

LOUISIANA SUPERCOP PAINT BALLIN

IT SEEMS THE LOUISIANA AUTHORITIES SENT OUT A FLYER AS SOON AS THEY FIGURED I'D SKIPPED BAIL.

NOW, THANKS TO A ROUTINE HOOKER SWEEP, GOTHAM CAN SEND A FLYER RIGHT BACK: "HERE SHE IS, GUYS. .

"COME AND GET HER."

THWIT
LEAVING ABBY'S APARTMENT.. I RETURN TO THE SWAMPS...
PERHAPS. . SHE CAME LOOKING FOR ME...
PLIK
KWAP
THLET
AND GOT EATEN BY AN ALLIGATOR...
. SMOTHERED ...IN A BOG...
...SCREAMING.. FOR HELP...AND I...WASN'T HERE...
NO!
SHE HAS...TO BE HERE SOMEWHERE... THERE HAS...TO BE...
SOME
TRACE
OF
HER.
JUMPS BAIL!
ARRESTED IN GOTHAM
THE HOUMA DAILY COURIER
WEATHER: STORMY
FEBRUARY 18, 1986
MONSTER SEX QUEEN
JUMPS BAIL!
ARRESTED IN GOTHAM!
EXTRADITION HEARING DATES SET!

ABBY

"POWER? POWER IS NOT THE THING TO BE CALM WITHIN ONESELF, THAT IS THE WAY OF THE WOOD.."

ABBY.

"POWER TEMPTS ANGER, AND ANGER IS LIKE WILDFIRE. AVOID IT."

AAAABBEEEEEEEEE

AND ALL THE DOGS OF HOUMA STARTED TO BARK...

AND THE CHILDREN OF HOUMA LAY AWAKE UNTIL DAWN, TOO FRIGHTENED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM DESPITE THE PRESSURE IN THEIR SADDERS.

...AND THE TREES SHIVERED IN A PANIC OF DEAD LEAVES...

.. AND THE MOON DREW THICK GRAY COVERS OVER ITS HEAD...

.. AND OUT IN THE SWAMP THE MONSTER RAGED, AND TRAMPLED...

..AND ROARED HIS LOVER'S NAME..

...AND PROMISED WAR.

NEXT:
NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

DC
SWAMP THING
BY ALAN MOORE, RICK VEITCH & ALFREDO ALCALA
52
75¢
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ARKHAM ASYLUM
SUPERMAN #432 concludes in ACTION #583!
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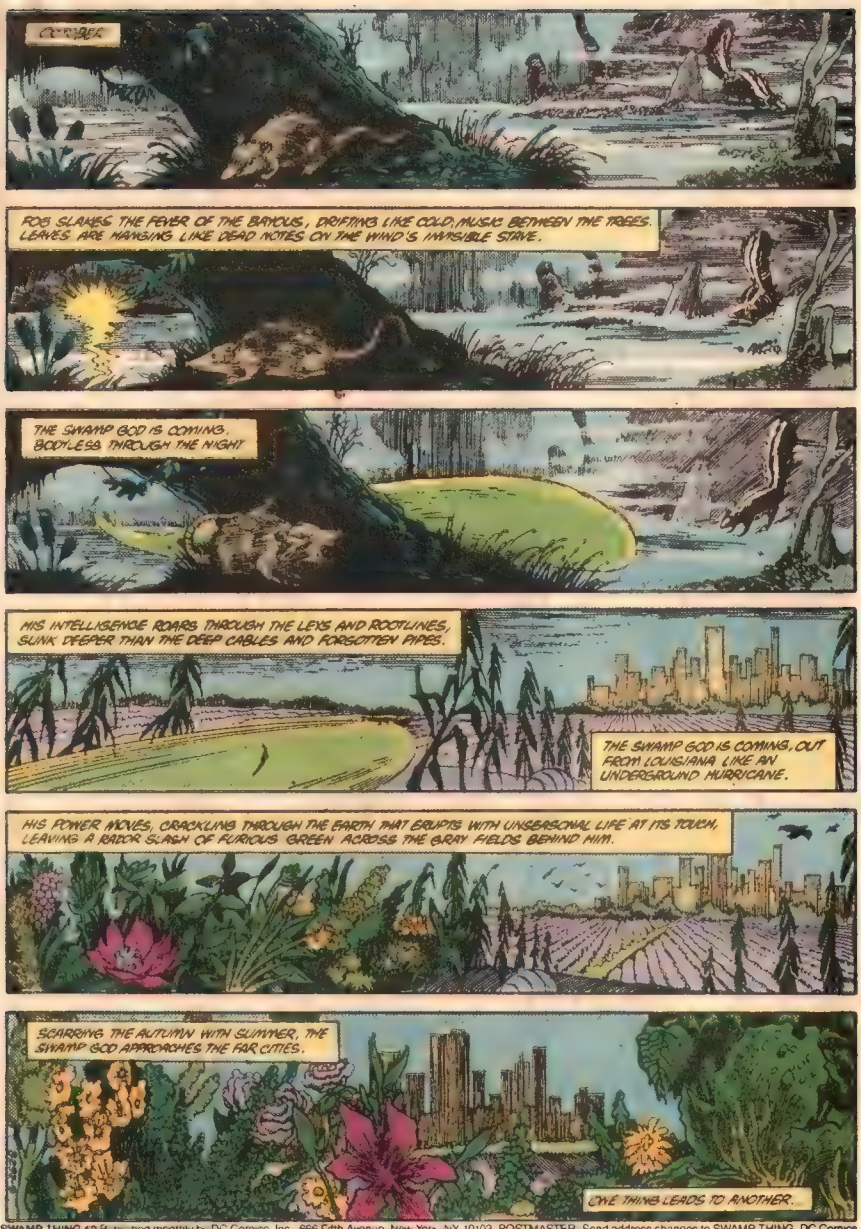
CORRIDER
ROB SLAKES THE FEVER OF THE BAYOUS, DRIFTING LIKE COLD MUSIC BETWEEN THE TREES. LEAVES ARE HANGING LIKE DEAD NOTES ON THE WIND'S INVISIBLE STAVE.
THE SWAMP GOD IS COMING. BODYLESS THROUGH THE NIGHT
HIS INTELLIGENCE ROARS THROUGH THE LEYS AND ROOTLINES, SLINK DEEPER THAN THE DEEP CABLES AND FORGOTTEN PIPES.
THE SWAMP GOD IS COMING, OUT FROM LOUISIANA LIKE AN UNDERGROUND HURRICANE.
HIS POWER MOVES, CRACKLING THROUGH THE EARTH THAT ERUPTS WITH UNPERSONAL LIFE AT ITS TOUCH, LEAVING A RAZOR SLASH OF FURIOUS GREEN ACROSS THE GRAY FIELDS BEHIND HIM.
SCARRING THE AUTUMN WITH SUMMER, THE SWAMP GOD APPROACHES THE FAR CITIES.
ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER.

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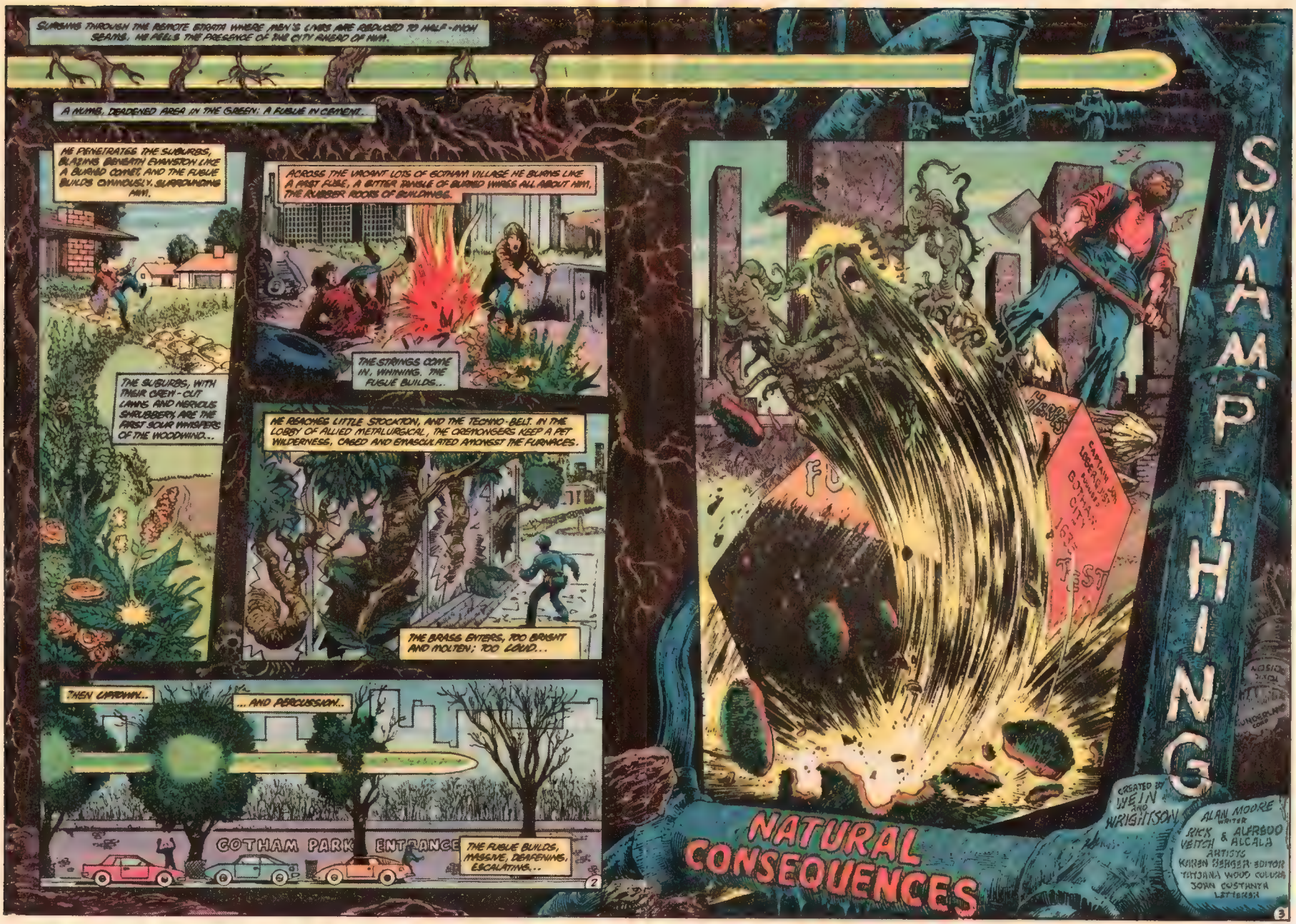
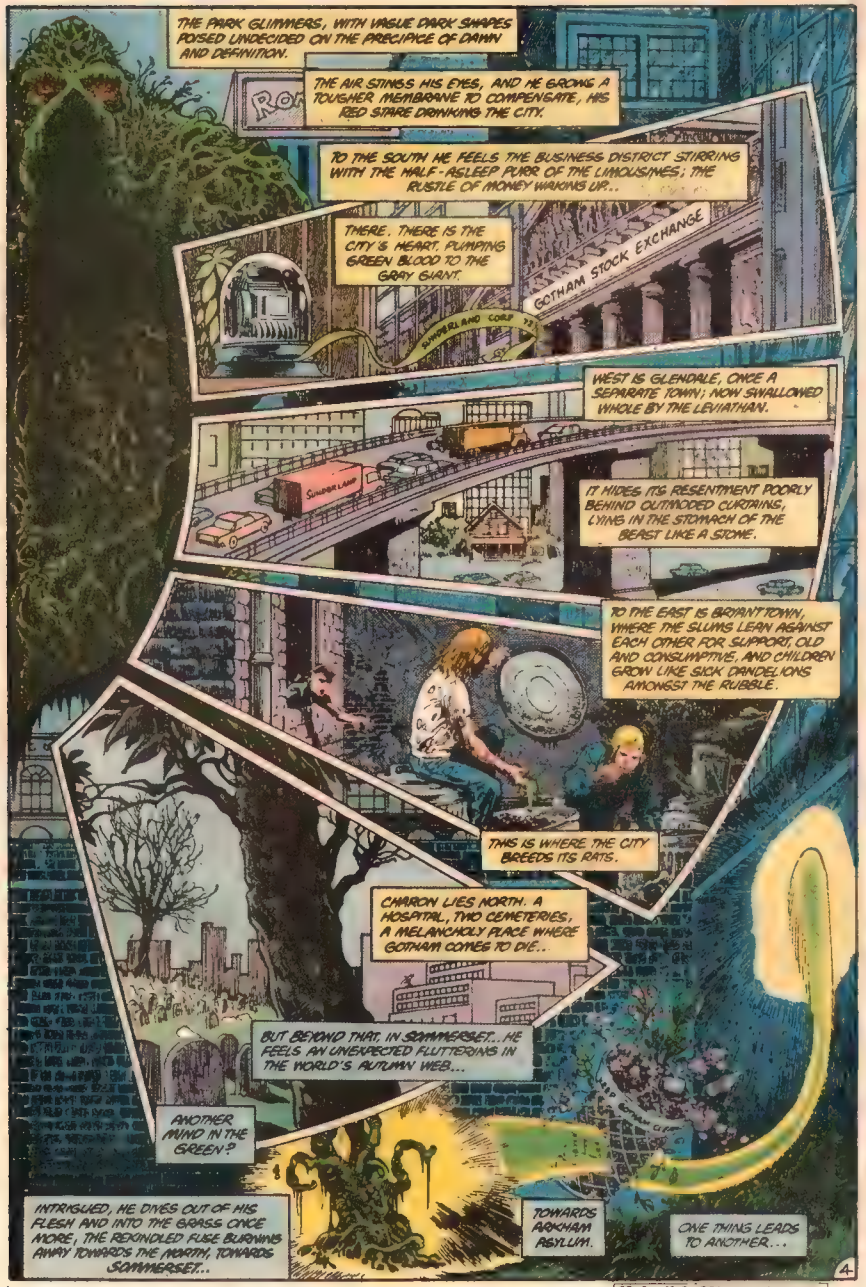
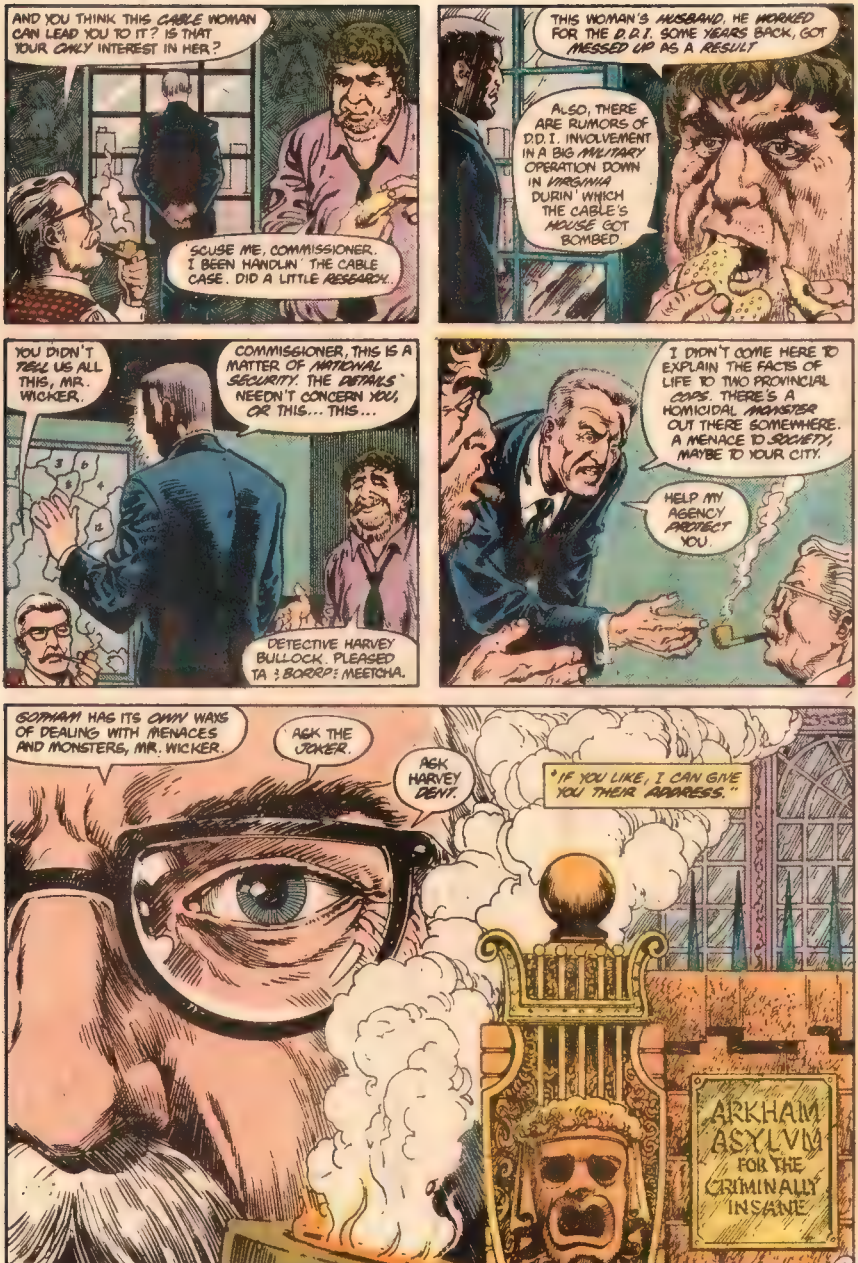
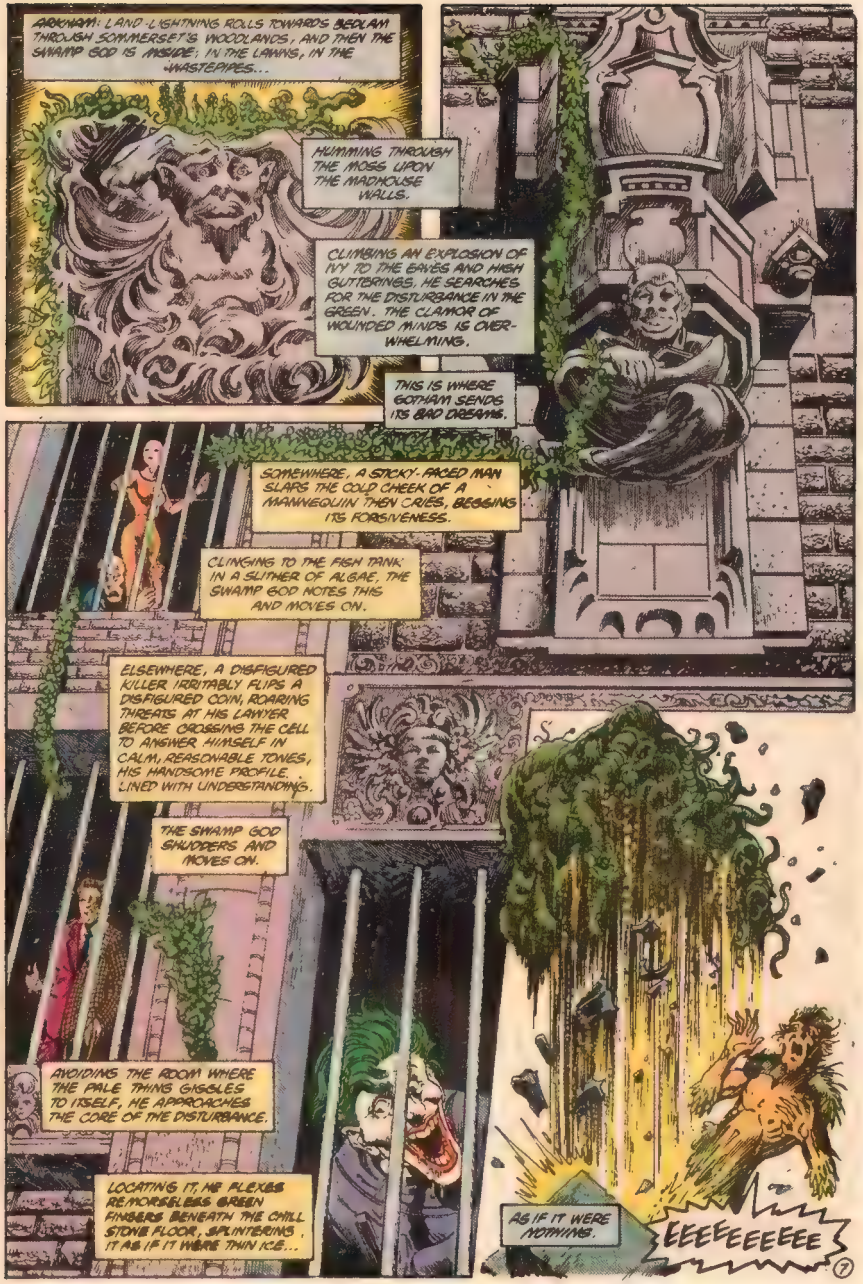

SLASHING THROUGH THE REMOTE STRATA WHERE MEN'S LIVES ARE ABSOLVED TO HALF-INCH SEAMS, HE FEELS THE PRESENCE OF THE CITY AHEAD OF HIM.
A NUMB, DEADENED AREA IN THE GREEN: A FUSILLADE IN CEMENT...
HE PENETRATES THE SUBURBS, BLAZING BENEATH EVANSTON LIKE A BURNED COMET, AND THE FUGUE BUILDS OMINOUSLY, SURROUNDING HIM.
THE SUBURBS, WITH THEIR CREW-CUT LAWNS AND HERCULES SHRUBBERY, ARE THE FIRST SOUR WHISPERS OF THE WOODWIND...
ACROSS THE VACANT LOTS OF GOTHAM VILLAGE HE BURNS LIKE A MAST FLUE, A BITTER TANGLE OF BURNED WIRES ALL ABOUT HIM, THE RUBBER ROOFS OF BUILDINGS.
THE STRINGS COME IN, WHINING. THE FUGUE BUILDS...
HE REACHES LITTLE STOCATON, AND THE TECHNO-BELT. IN THE LOBBY OF ALLIED METALURGICAL, THE CREMONGERS KEEP A PET WILDERNESS, CAGED AND EMASCULATED AMONGST THE FURNACES.
THE BRASS ENTERS, TOO BRIGHT AND MOLTEN; TOO LOUD...
THEN UPROWN...
...AND ABSCUSSION..
GOTHAM PARK ENTRANCE
THE FUGUE BUILDS, MASSIVE, DEAFENING, ESCALATING...
2
SWAMP THING
NATURAL CONSEQUENCES
CREATED BY WEIN AND WRIGHTSON
ALAN MOORE WRITER
RICK VEITCH & ALFREDO ALCALA ARTISTS
KAREN BERGER EDITOR
TATJANA WOOD COLORS
JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER
3


THE PARK GLIMMERS, WITH VAGUE DARK SHAPES POISED UNDECIDED ON THE PRECIPICE OF DAWN AND DEFINITION.
THE AIR STINGS HIS EYES, AND HE GROWS A TOUGHER MEMBRANE TO COMPENSATE, HIS RED STARE DRINKING THE CITY.
TO THE SOUTH HE FEELS THE BUSINESS DISTRICT STIRRING WITH THE HALF-ASLEEP PURR OF THE LIMOUSINES; THE RUSTLE OF MONEY WAKING UP..
THERE. THERE IS THE CITY'S HEART, PUMPING GREEN BLOOD TO THE GRAY GIANT.
GOTHAM STOCK EXCHANGE
RUMMERLAND CORP
WEST IS GLENDALE, ONCE A SEPARATE TOWN; NOW SWALLOWED WHOLE BY THE LEVIATHAN.
SUMMER LAND
IT HIDES ITS RESENTMENT POORLY BEHIND OUTMODED CURTAINS, LYING IN THE STOMACH OF THE BEAST LIKE A STONE.
TO THE EAST IS BRYANT TOWN, WHERE THE SLUMS LEAN AGAINST EACH OTHER FOR SUPPORT, OLD AND CONSUMPTIVE, AND CHILDREN GROW LIKE SICK DANDELIONS AMONGST THE RUBBLE.
THIS IS WHERE THE CITY BREEDS ITS RATS.
CHARON LIES NORTH. A HOSPITAL, TWO CEMETERIES, A MELANCHOLY PLACE WHERE GOTHAM COMES TO DIE..
BUT BEYOND THAT, IN SOMMERSET... HE FEELS AN UNEXPECTED FLUTTERING IN THE WORLD'S AUTUMN WEB...
ANOTHER MIND IN THE GREEN?
INTRIGUED, HE DIVES OUT OF HIS FLESH AND INTO THE GRASS ONCE MORE, THE REKINDLED FUSE BURNING AWAY TOWARDS THE NORTH, TOWARDS SOMMERSET..
TOWARDS ARKHAM ASYLUM.
ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER...

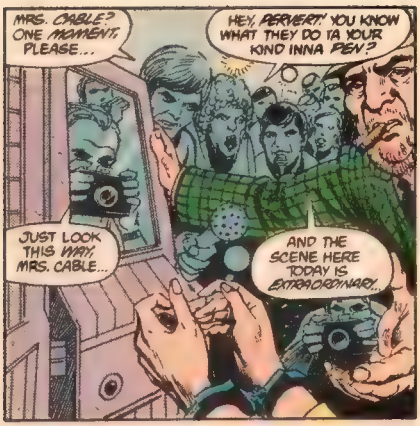
CONTINUED ON 32

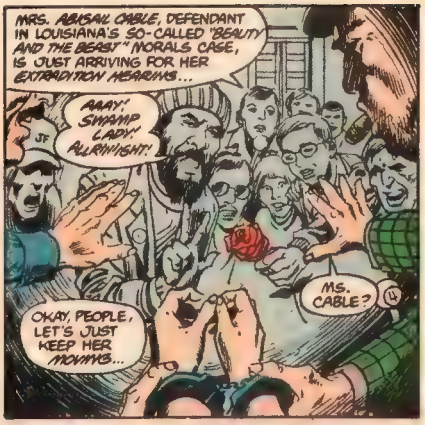
JUST ONE LEAD. THAT'S ALL I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR, THESE PAST TWO YEARS.
NOT UNTIL AFTER HER EXTRADITION HEARING, FIRST THING THIS MORNING.
YOU ARE FROM THE GOVERNMENT, MR. ...?
NOW I'VE GOT IT.
FRANKLY, I STILL DON'T SEE WHY A MORALS CASE, HOWEVER BIZARRE, MERITS GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT
GOTHAM CITY POLICE DEPT.
WHEN CAN I SEE HER?
68830
68830
AS FOR THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENSE, WE BELIEVE THE BEING THIS WOMAN COMMUNES WITH IS GUILTY OF FIRST-DEGREE MURDER. YOU RECALL THE SUNDERLAND CASE?
I'M WITH THE D.D.I. ...
WICKER DWIGHT WICKER.
...AND YES, WE DO HAVE CERTAIN GOVERNMENT AFFILIATIONS.
IN WASHINGTON? SOME BIG INDUSTRIALIST GOT FOUND DEAD?
"FOUND SMOTHERED, IN THE LOBBY OF HIS OWN BUILDING. SUNDERLAND HAD BEEN STUDYING THE MONSTER, BELIEVING IT TO BE DEAD.
"IT WASN'T... BUT GENERAL SUNDERLAND VERY SHORTLY WAS."
THERE WAS MOSS IN HIS MOUTH.
THERE WAS GREEN PULP BENEATH HIS FINGERNAILS.
COMMISSIONER, I WANT THAT CREATURE.
5

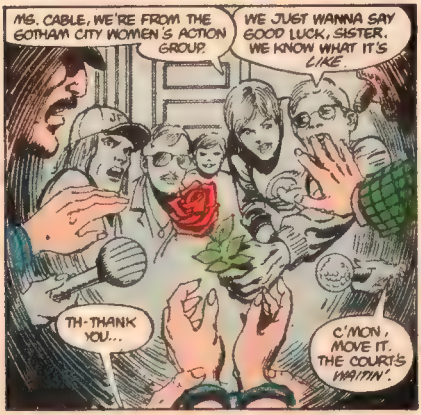

AND YOU THINK THIS CABLE WOMAN CAN LEAD YOU TO IT? IS THAT YOUR ONLY INTEREST IN HER?
SCUSE ME, COMMISSIONER. I BEEN HANDLIN' THE CABLE CASE. DID A LITTLE RESEARCH.
THIS WOMAN'S HUSBAND, HE WORKED FOR THE D.D.I. SOME YEARS BACK, GOT MESSED UP AS A RESULT
ALSO, THERE ARE RUMORS OF D.D.I. INVOLVEMENT IN A BIG MILITARY OPERATION DOWN IN VIRGINIA DURIN' WHICH THE CABLE'S HOUSE GOT BOMBED.
YOU DIDN'T TELL US ALL THIS, MR. WICKER.
COMMISSIONER, THIS IS A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY. THE DETAILS NEEDN'T CONCERN YOU, OR THIS... THIS...
DETECTIVE HARVEY BULLOCK. PLEASED TA ? BORRP: MEETCHA.
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO EXPLAIN THE FACTS OF LIFE TO TWO PROVINCIAL COPS. THERE'S A HOMICIDAL MONSTER OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. A MENACE TO SOCIETY, MAYBE TO YOUR CITY.
HELP MY AGENCY PROTECT YOU.
GOTHAM HAS ITS OWN WAYS OF DEALING WITH MENACES AND MONSTERS, MR. WICKER.
ASK THE JOKER.
ASK HARVEY DENT.
"IF YOU LIKE, I CAN GIVE YOU THEIR ADDRESS."
ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

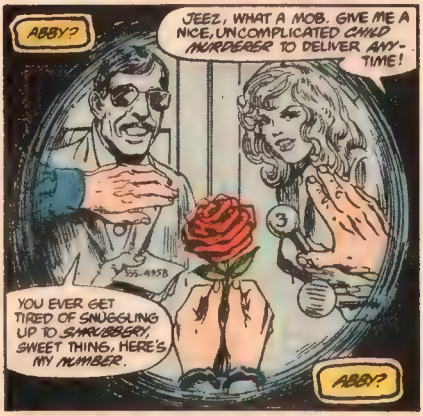

ARKHAM: LAND-LIGHTNING ROLLS TOWARDS BEDLAM THROUGH SOMMERSET'S WOODLANDS, AND THEN THE SWAMP GOD IS INSIDE: IN THE LAWNS, IN THE WASTEPIPES...
HUMMING THROUGH THE MOSS UPON THE MADHOUSE WALLS.
CLIMBING AN EXPLOSION OF IVY TO THE EAVES AND HIGH GUTTERINGS, HE SEARCHES FOR THE DISTURBANCE IN THE GREEN. THE CLAMOR OF WOUNDED MINDS IS OVERWHELMING.
THIS IS WHERE GOTHAM SENDS ITS BAD DREAMS.
SOMEWHERE, A STICKY-FACED MAN SLAPS THE COLD CHEEK OF A MANNEQUIN THEN CRIES, BEGGING ITS FORGIVENESS.
CLINGING TO THE FISH TANK IN A SLITHER OF ALGAE, THE SWAMP GOD NOTES THIS AND MOVES ON.
ELSEWHERE, A DISFIGURED KILLER IRRITABLY FLIPS A DISFIGURED COIN, ROARING THREATS AT HIS LAWYER BEFORE CROSSING THE CELL TO ANSWER HIMSELF IN CALM, REASONABLE TONES, HIS HANDSOME PROFILE LINED WITH UNDERSTANDING.
THE SWAMP GOD SHUDDERS AND MOVES ON.
AVOIDING THE ROOM WHERE THE PALE THING GIGGLES TO ITSELF, HE APPROACHES THE CORE OF THE DISTURBANCE.
LOCATING IT, HE FLEXES REMORSELESS GREEN FINGERS BENEATH THE CHILL STONE FLOOR, SPLINTERING IT AS IF IT WERE THIN ICE...
AS IF IT WERE NOTHING.
EEEEEEEEEE
7

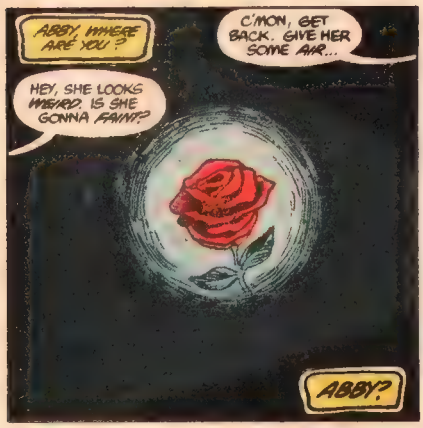
I-IT'S YOU. THE SWAMP GOD. YOU'VE COME.
COME TO AVENGE ME.
NO, WOODRUE.
I MERELY NOTICED.. YOUR AURA... AND INVESTIGATED. IT IS NOT YOU.. THAT I SEEK..
IT IS NOT YOU.. THAT I HAVE COME TO PUNISH.
BUT... ALL THE THINGS I DID. I HURT THE GREEN, TRIED TO USE IT IN ANGER AGAINST THE HUMANS. I WAS SO WRONG..
SO UNFORGIVABLY WRONG.
WOODRUE
THE WRATH.. OF NATURE... IS NOT WRONG... NOR IS IT UNJUST.. THAT MAN.. SHOULD BEAR ITS BRUNT.
FOR ANGER AT LEAST.. I FORGIVE YOU...
THE GREEN.. FORGIVES YOU..
BUT YOU ARE THE LAST.. THAT SHALL BE FORGIVEN THIS DAY...
...AND A CITY.. AWAITS MY JUDGMENT.
WHAT! DON'T GO! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS PLACE IS LIKE! PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME HERE...
DON'T LEAVE ME HERE WITH THE VOICES.
8

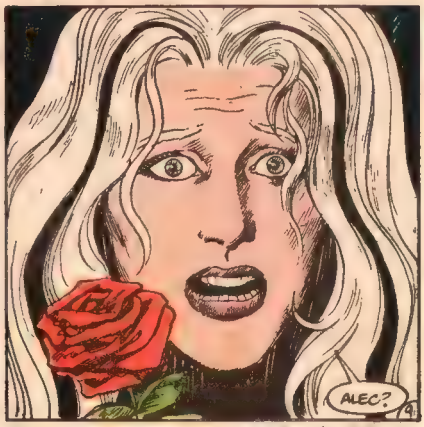

MRS. CABLE? ONE MOMENT, PLEASE...
HEY, PERVERT! YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DO TA YOUR KIND INNA PEN?
JUST LOOK THIS WAY, MRS. CABLE...
AND THE SCENE HERE TODAY IS EXTRAORDINARY.

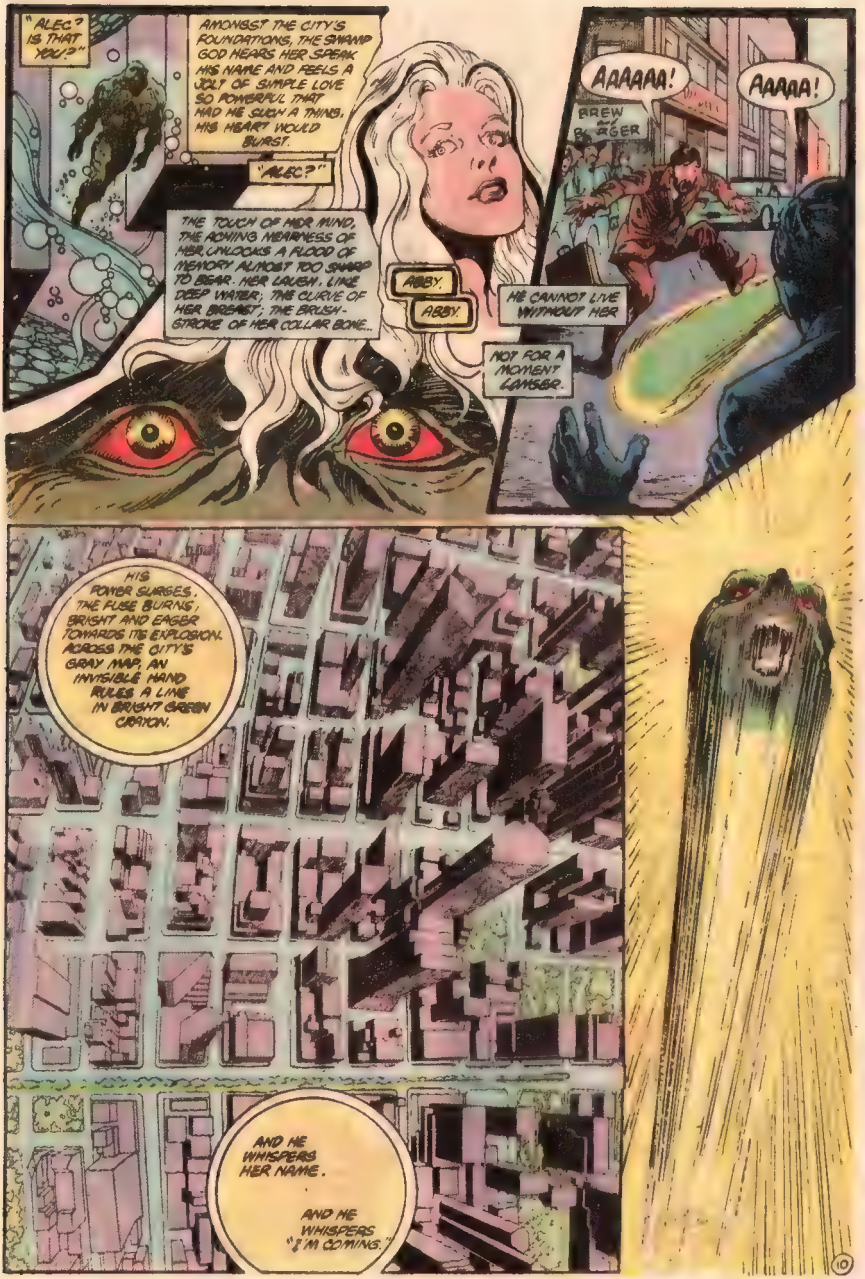

MRS. ABIGAIL CABLE, DEFENDANT IN LOUISIANA'S SO-CALLED "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST" MORALS CASE, IS JUST ARRIVING FOR HER EXTRADITION HEARINGS...
AAAY! SWAMP LADY! ALRIIIIGHT!
MS. CABLE?
OKAY, PEOPLE, LET'S JUST KEEP HER MOVING...


MS. CABLE, WE'RE FROM THE GOTHAM CITY WOMEN'S ACTION GROUP.
WE JUST WANNA SAY GOOD LUCK, SISTER. WE KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE.
TH-THANK YOU...
C'MON, MOVE IT. THE COURT'S WAITIN'.

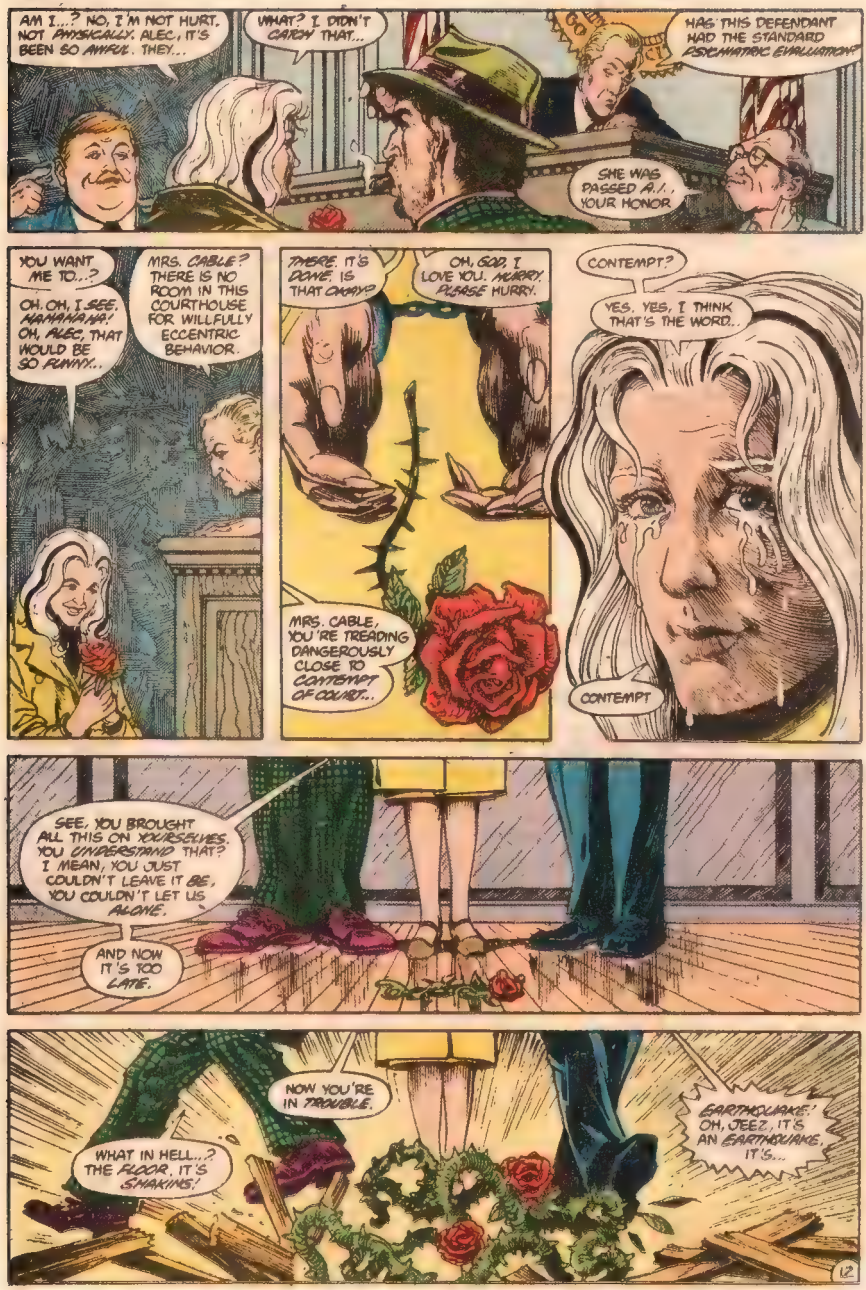

ABBY?
JEEZ, WHAT A MOB. GIVE ME A NICE, UNCOMPLICATED CHILD MURDERER TO DELIVER ANY-TIME!
555-4958
YOU EVER GET TIRED OF SNUGGLING UP TO SHRUBBERY, SWEET THING, HERE'S MY NUMBER.
ABBY?


ABBY, WHERE ARE YOU?
C'MON, GET BACK. GIVE HER SOME AIR...
HEY, SHE LOOKS WEIRD. IS SHE GONNA FAINT?
ABBY?


ALEC?

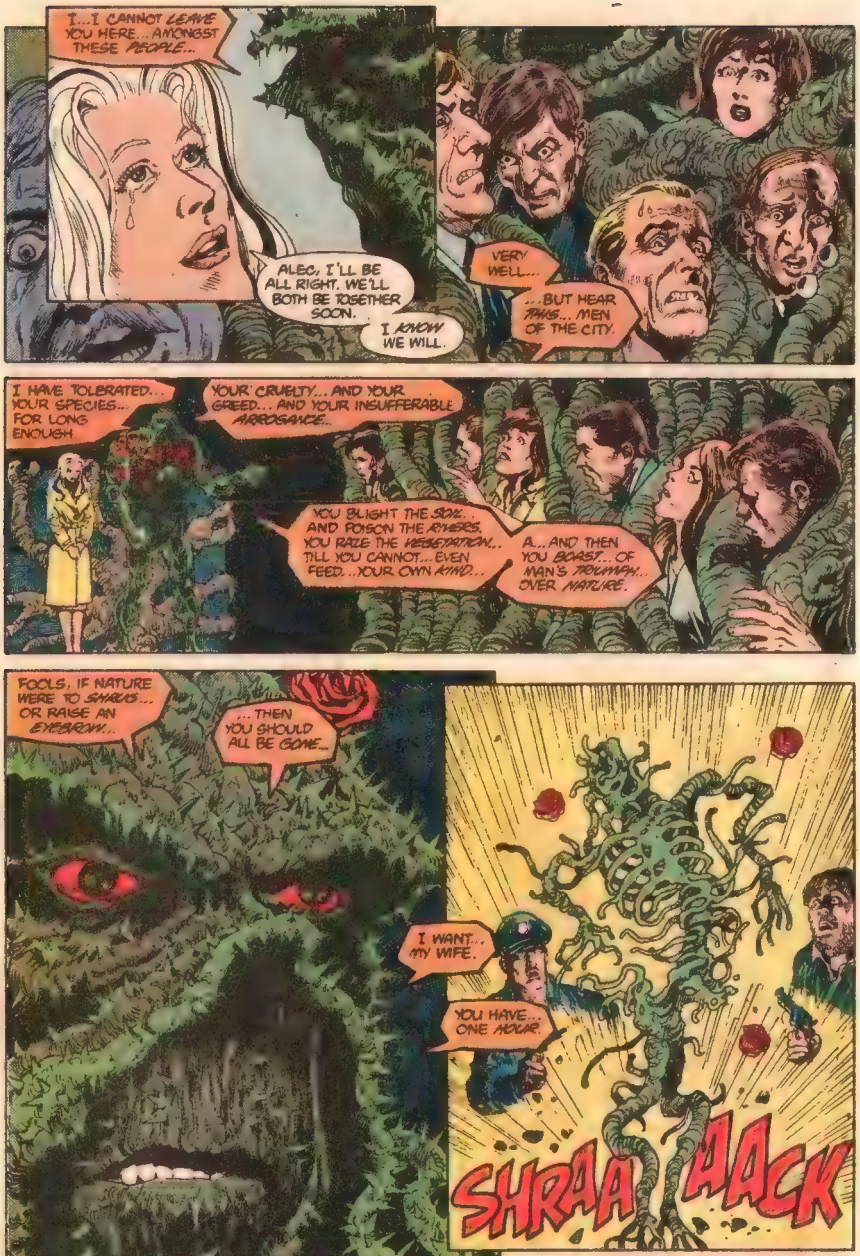

"ALEC? IS THAT YOU?"
AMONGST THE CITY'S FOUNDATIONS, THE SWAMP GOD HEARS HER SPEAK HIS NAME AND FEELS A JOLT OF SIMPLE LOVE SO POWERFUL THAT HAD HE SUCH A THING, HIS HEART WOULD BURST.
"ALEC?"
THE TOUCH OF HER MIND, THE ACHING NEARNESS OF HER, UNLOCKS A FLOOD OF MEMORY ALMOST TOO SHARP TO BEAR. HER LAUGH. LIKE DEEP WATER; THE CURVE OF HER BREAST; THE BRUSH-STROKE OF HER COLLAR BONE...
ABBY.
ABBY.
AAAAAA!
AAAAA!
HE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT HER
NOT FOR A MOMENT LONGER.
HIS POWER SURGES. THE FUSE BURNS, BRIGHT AND EAGER TOWARDS ITS EXPLOSION. ACROSS THE CITY'S GRAY MAP, AN INVISIBLE HAND RULES A LINE IN BRIGHT GREEN CRAYON.
AND HE WHISPERS HER NAME.
AND HE WHISPERS "I'M COMING."

IT'S OKAY. I THINK SHE'S SNAPPING OUT OF IT. HER PUPILS LOOK KINDA DILATED. COULD BE A DRUG REACTION...
YOUR HONOR, I SUBMIT THAT MY CLIENT IS CLEARLY UNFIT TO TESTIFY AT THIS HEARING.
MR. BARNARD, I CAN APPRECIATE YOUR CLIENT'S WISH TO DELAY EXTRADITION, BUT FROM THE REACTION OUTSIDE, I THINK IT'S CLEAR THAT GOTHAM WANTS THIS WOMAN OFF ITS HANDS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
THE HEARING WILL PROCEED...
FIRSTLY, WE MUST ESTABLISH HER IDENTITY.
WHEN ARRESTED, YOU GAVE THE NAME ABIGAIL HOLLAND TO THE ARRESTING OFFICERS. YOU HAVE SINCE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS MRS. ABIGAIL CABLE.
IS CABLE YOUR TRUE NAME?
MRS. CABLE?
MRS CABLE, I ASKED YOU A QUESTION...
OH.
OH, HE'S SO ANGRY.
NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THIS, SO FIERCE AND STRONG. HE'S COMING THIS WAY. HE...
ALEC?
OH, ALEC, CAN YOU HEAR ME?


AM I...? NO, I'M NOT HURT. NOT PHYSICALLY. ALEC, IT'S BEEN SO AWFUL. THEY...
WHAT? I DIDN'T CARRY THAT...
HAS THIS DEFENDANT HAD THE STANDARD PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION?
SHE WAS PASSED A.I., YOUR HONOR
YOU WANT ME TO...?
OH. OH, I SEE. HAHAHAHA! OH, ALEC, THAT WOULD BE SO FUNNY...
MRS. CABLE? THERE IS NO ROOM IN THIS COURTHOUSE FOR WILLFULLY ECCENTRIC BEHAVIOR.
THERE. IT'S DONE. IS THAT OKAY?
OH, GOD. I LOVE YOU. MARRY. PLEASE HURRY.
MRS. CABLE, YOU'RE TREADING DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO CONTEMPT OF COURT...
CONTEMPT?
YES, YES, I THINK THAT'S THE WORD...
CONTEMPT
SEE, YOU BROUGHT ALL THIS ON YOURSELVES. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? I MEAN, YOU JUST COULDN'T LEAVE IT BE, YOU COULDN'T LET US ALONE.
AND NOW IT'S TOO LATE.
WHAT IN HELL...? THE FLOOR, IT'S SHAKING!
NOW YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.
EARTHQUAKE! OH, JEEZ, IT'S AN EARTHQUAKE. IT'S...

MY LOVE.
ABBY..?
WHAT... HAVE THESE CREATURES... COME TO YOU...?
JEEZ.. IT'S TALKING.
HOLD IT THERE, PAL! TAKE ONE MORE STEP AND I'M WARNING YOU...
WARNING... ME...?
AAAAAGH
SKRRETCH
YOU.. ARE WARNING... ME...?

DO... YOU HEARK... THE HURRICANE?
DO YOU HARK... THE EARTHQUAKE?
RRRUNCH
SHRAAKK
YOU HAVE TAKEN... THAT WHICH I LOVE... AWAY FROM ME.
I HAVE COME... TO ABRAHAM IV.
MISTER...
EEEEEE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL YOU ARE, BUT THAT WOMAN IS IN THE CUSTODY OF THIS CITY. SHE AIN'T GOIN' ANYWHERE 'CEPT BACK TO FACE TRIAL IN LOUISIANA.
NOW BACK OFF OR WE OPEN FIRE!
ALWAYS GUNS. ARE THEY... YOUR ONLY. SOLUTION.?
YOU CAN SHOOT THE ANIMALS. IN THE FOREST...
BUT YOU CANNOT SHOOT THE FOREST.
I THINK WE CAN MAYBE CHIP THE BARK A LITTLE.
MEN, IF IT MOVES, SHOOT IT!
NO!
ALEC.. DON'T MAKE THEM SHOOT NOT MORE. SOMEBODY WILL GET HURT.
I DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN. NOT BECAUSE OF ME.
LEAVE IT, ALEC. LEAVE IT FOR NOW.
15


I...I CANNOT LEAVE YOU HERE...AMONGST THESE PEOPLE...
ALEC, I'LL BE ALL RIGHT. WE'LL BOTH BE TOGETHER SOON.
I KNOW WE WILL.
VERY WELL...
...BUT HEAR THIS... MEN OF THE CITY.
I HAVE TOLERATED... YOUR SPECIES... FOR LONG ENOUGH
YOUR CRUELTY... AND YOUR GREED... AND YOUR INSUFFERABLE ARROGANCE..
YOU BLIGHT THE SOIL... AND POISON THE RIVERS. YOU RAZE THE VEGETATION... TILL YOU CANNOT... EVEN FEED...YOUR OWN KIND...
A...AND THEN YOU BOAST... OF MAN'S TRIUMPH... OVER NATURE.
FOOLS, IF NATURE WERE TO SHRUG... OR RAISE AN EYEBROW..
...THEN YOU SHOULD ALL BE GONE..
I WANT... MY WIFE..
YOU HAVE... ONE HOUR.
SHRAA
AACK

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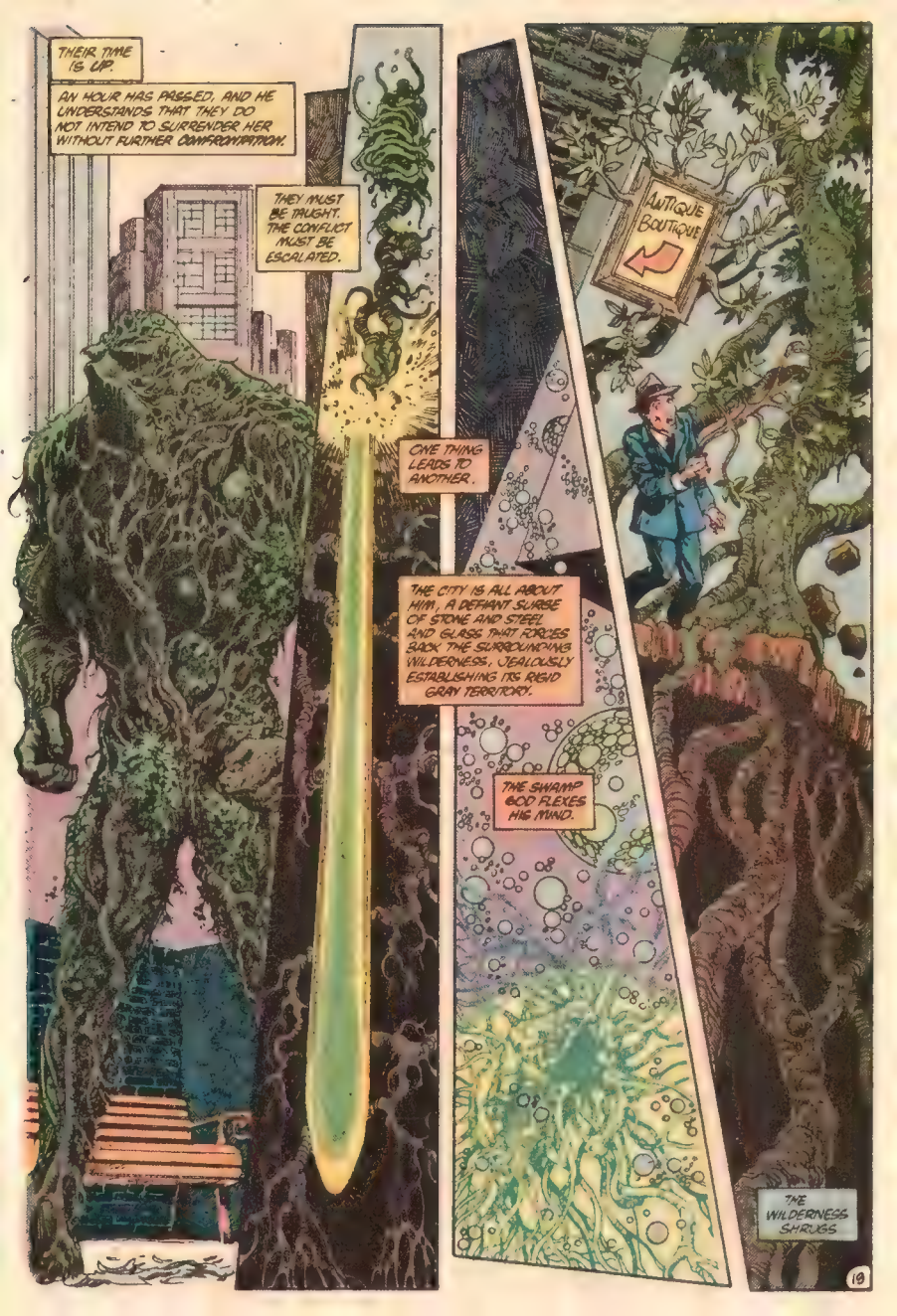
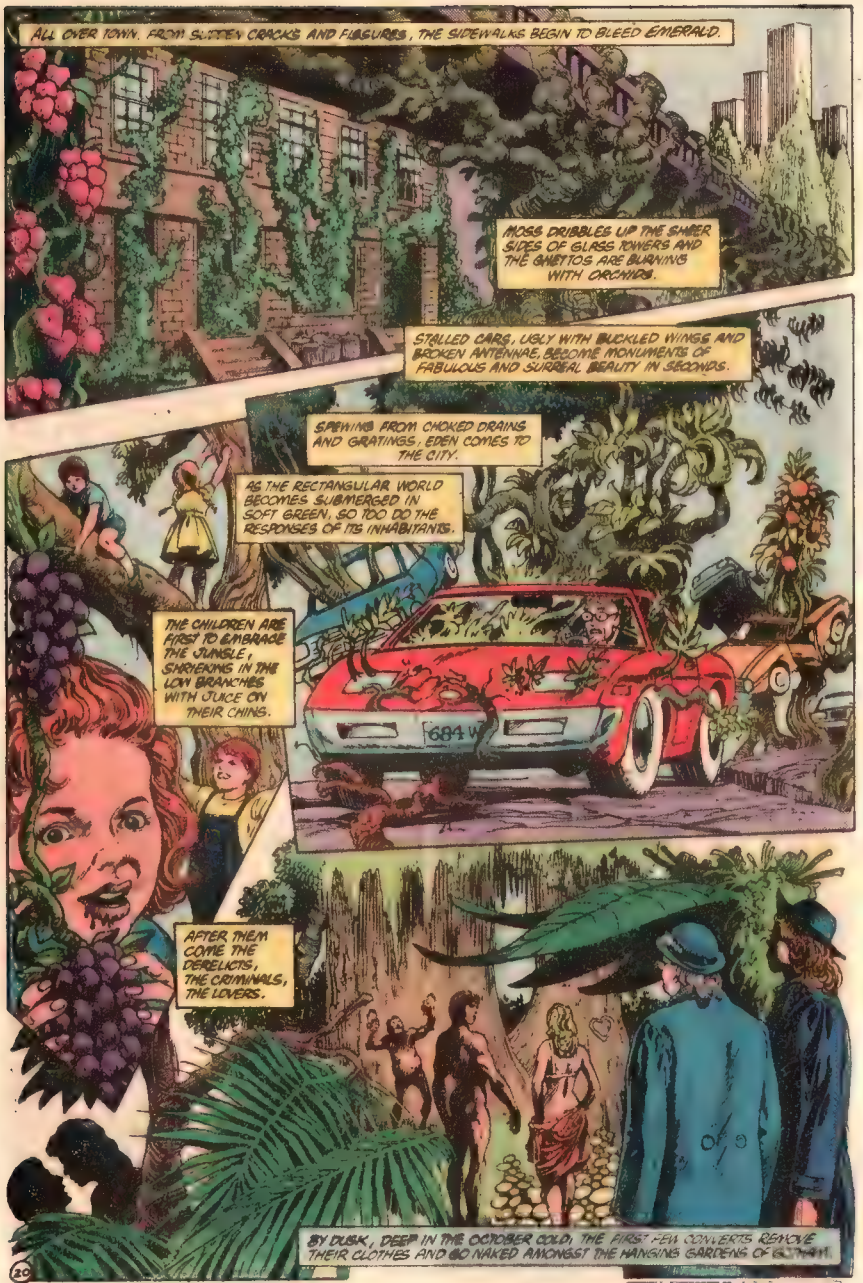
SSSIIIZZZIIISSSSSIIZZSSS
SSIIIZZZIISSIIZZISSSSS
SSIIIZZZIIIIISSSIIIZZZ
SSSIIIZZZIIIISSIIZZZ
PRESS
PRESS
GUYS? I THINK WE GOT A STORY TO CALL IN.
HMM.
NOT BAD.

THIS LOOKS BAD, WICKER.
VERY BAD.
I DISAGREE, SIR.
WATCHMAN
ADMITTEDLY, I DIDN'T EXPECT TO LOCATE THE SWAMP MONSTER SO SOON, BUT THAT JUST MEANS WE CAN BE RID OF HIM ALL THE QUICKER. THE BENEFITS ARE OBVIOUS.
OF COURSE
AFTER ALL THE LEAKS AND BUNGLINGS LEADING UP TO SUNDERLAND'S DEATH, AS HEAD OF THE D.D.I. I'D BE DELIGHTED TO SEE THE LAST WITNESSES FINALLY SILENCED.
MY ONLY QUESTION IS HOW?
I'VE APPROACHED AN EXPERT ON THE SUBJECT. PERHAPS I SHOULD INTRODUCE HIM.
FROM THE VARIOUS REPORTS WE'VE HAD, PLUS THIS LATEST MANIFESTATION, THE SWAMP CREATURE SEEMS TO HAVE GROWN MUCH MORE POWERFUL.
CAN HE BE KILLED?
ALTHOUGH MY EXPERT CONTACT IS CHARGING ONE MILLION DOLLARS FOR A TEN-MINUTE CONSULTANCY, I THINK YOU'LL AGREE HE'S WORTH IT.
WE NEED TO DESTROY AN INDESTRUCTIBLE BEING. MY CONTACT IS A SPECIALIST IN THAT AREA.
GENTLEMEN
...MR. LEX LUTHOR.
OUR TEN MINUTES STARTS NOW.


THEIR TIME IS UP.
AN HOUR HAS PASSED, AND HE UNDERSTANDS THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO SURRENDER HER WITHOUT FURTHER CONFRONTATION.
THEY MUST BE TAUGHT. THE CONFLICT MUST BE ESCALATED.
ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER.
THE CITY IS ALL ABOUT HIM, A DEFIANT SURGE OF STONE AND STEEL AND GLASS THAT FORCES BACK THE SURROUNDING WILDERNESS, JEALOUSLY ESTABLISHING ITS RIGID GRAY TERRITORY.
THE SWAMP GOD FLEXES HIS MIND.
ANTIQUE BOUTIQUE
THE WILDERNESS SHRUGS


ALL OVER TOWN, FROM SLITTEN CRACKS AND FISSURES, THE SIDEWALKS BEGIN TO BLEED EMERALD.
MOSS DRIBBLES UP THE SHEER SIDES OF GLASS TOWERS AND THE GHETTOS ARE BURNING WITH ORCHIDS.
STALLED CARS, UGLY WITH BUCKLED WINGS AND BROKEN ANTENNAE, BECOME MONUMENTS OF FABULOUS AND SURREAL BEAUTY IN SECONDS.
SPEWING FROM CHOKED DRAINS AND GRATINGS, EDEN COMES TO THE CITY.
AS THE RECTANGULAR WORLD BECOMES SUBMERGED IN SOFT GREEN, SO TOO DO THE RESPONSES OF ITS INHABITANTS.
THE CHILDREN ARE FIRST TO EMBRACE THE JUNGLE, SHRIEKING IN THE LOW BRANCHES WITH JUICE ON THEIR CHINS.
AFTER THEM COME THE DERELICTS, THE CRIMINALS, THE LOVERS.
BY DUSK, DEEP IN THE OCTOBER COLD, THE FIRST FEW CONVERTS REMOVE THEIR CLOTHES AND GO NAKED AMONGST THE HANGING GARDENS OF GOTHAM.

LOST IN A PRIMAL LANDSCAPE, THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY REACHED PRIMORDIALLY, WITH TEETH AND NAILS AND LOINS.
RUSTLING THROUGH THE FOLIAGE AROUND THEM, THE SWAMP GOD SWIMS WITH SATISFACTION
WHY? WHY HAD HE BOTHERED TO RESTRAIN THIS GLORIOUS POWER FOR SO LONG?
WHY HOLD BACK PARADISE?
DISTANTLY HE RECALLS A WARNING, A WARNING ABOUT POWER AND HE KNOWS HE MUST BE CAUTIOUS.
THE CREATURES IN THIS PLACE HAVE THEIR OWN RESOURCES, AND HE MUST NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THEM.
FOR THIS IS NOT HIS JUNGLE
THIS IS NOT HIS HOME TURF.

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER.

GIANT-SIZED SPECTACULAR!
SWAMP THING
BY ALAN MOORE & JOHN TOTLEBEN
53
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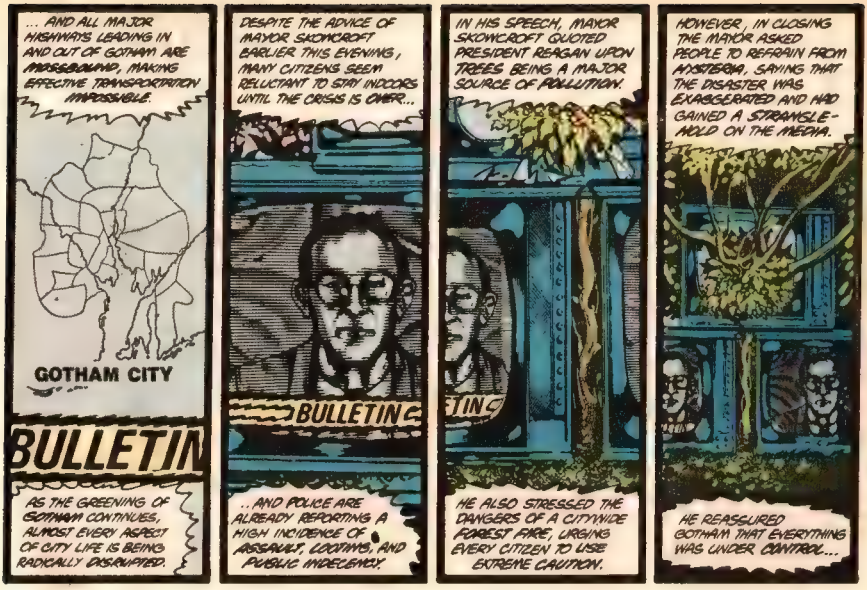
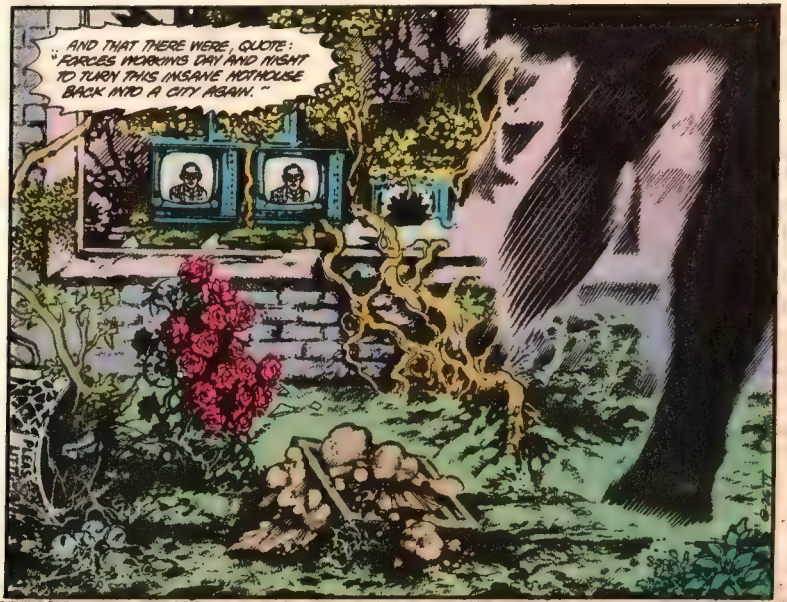
OCT 86
Can you solve the DC CHALLENGE before we do?


... AND ALL MAJOR HIGHWAYS LEADING IN AND OUT OF GOTHAM ARE INCREDIBLY CONGESTED, MAKING EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPOSSIBLE.
GOTHAM CITY
BULLETIN
AS THE GREENING OF GOTHAM CONTINUES, ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF CITY LIFE IS BEING RADICALLY DISRUPTED.
DESPITE THE ADVICE OF MAYOR SKOWCROFT EARLIER THIS EVENING, MANY CITIZENS SEEM RELUCTANT TO STAY INDOORS UNTIL THE CRISIS IS OVER...
BULLETIN
..AND POLICE ARE ALREADY REPORTING A HIGH INCIDENCE OF ASSAULT, LOOTING, AND PUBLIC INDECENCY.
IN HIS SPEECH, MAYOR SKOWCROFT QUOTED PRESIDENT REAGAN UPON TREES BEING A MAJOR SOURCE OF POLLUTION.
HE ALSO STRESSED THE DANGERS OF A CITYWIDE FOREST FIRE, URGING EVERY CITIZEN TO USE EXTREME CAUTION.
HOWEVER, IN CLOSING THE MAYOR ASKED PEOPLE TO REFRAIN FROM HYSTERIA, SAYING THAT THE DISASTER WAS EXAGGERATED AND HAD GAINED A STRANGLE-HOLD ON THE MEDIA.
HE REASSURED GOTHAM THAT EVERYTHING WAS UNDER CONTROL...



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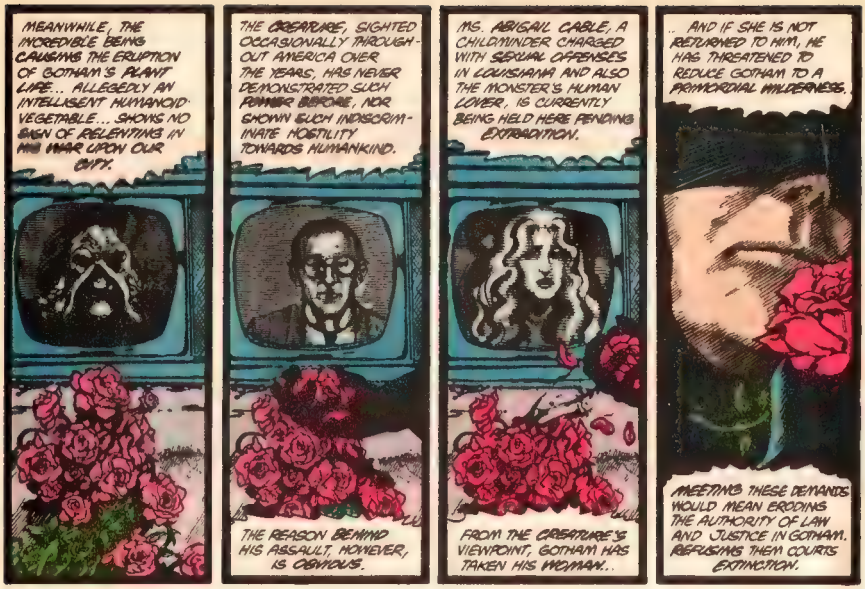
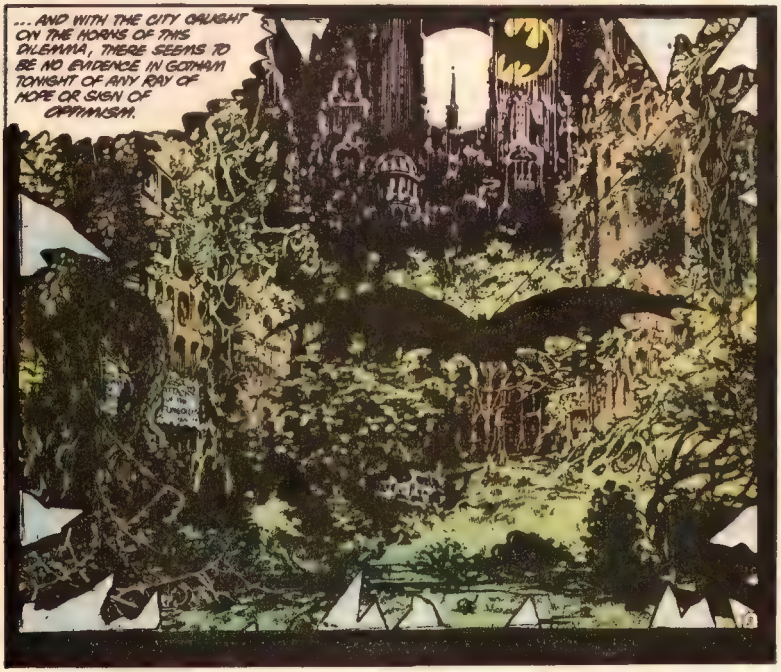
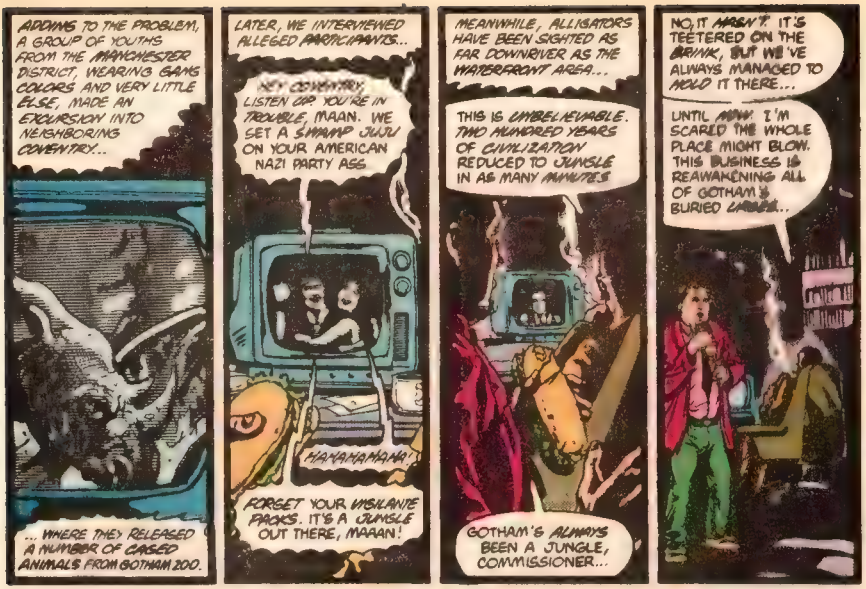

MEANWHILE, THE INCREDIBLE BEING CAUSING THE ERUPTION OF GOTHAM'S PLANT LIFE... ALLEGEDLY AN INTELLIGENT HUMANOID VEGETABLE... SHOWS NO SIGN OF RELENTING IN HIS WAR UPON OUR CITY.
THE CREATURE, SIGHTED OCCASIONALLY THROUGHOUT AMERICA OVER THE YEARS, HAS NEVER DEMONSTRATED SUCH POWER BEFORE, NOR SHOWN SUCH INDISCRIMINATE HOSTILITY TOWARDS HUMANKIND.
THE REASON BEHIND HIS ASSAULT, HOWEVER, IS OBVIOUS.
MS. ABIGAIL CABLE, A CHILDMINDER CHARGED WITH SEXUAL OFFENSES IN LOUISIANA AND ALSO THE MONSTER'S HUMAN LOVER, IS CURRENTLY BEING HELD HERE PENDING EXTRADITION.
FROM THE CREATURE'S VIEWPOINT, GOTHAM HAS TAKEN HIS WOMAN...
.. AND IF SHE IS NOT RETURNED TO HIM, HE HAS THREATENED TO REDUCE GOTHAM TO A PRIMORDIAL WILDERNESS.
MEETING THESE DEMANDS WOULD MEAN ERODING THE AUTHORITY OF LAW AND JUSTICE IN GOTHAM. REFUSING THEM COURTS EXTINCTION.


... AND WITH THE CITY CAUGHT ON THE HORNS OF THIS DILEMMA, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO EVIDENCE IN GOTHAM TONIGHT OF ANY RAY OF HOPE OR SIGN OF OPTIMISM.


ADDING TO THE PROBLEM, A GROUP OF YOUTHS FROM THE MANCHESTER DISTRICT, WEARING GANG COLORS AND VERY LITTLE ELSE, MADE AN EXCURSION INTO NEIGHBORING COVENTRY...
... WHERE THEY RELEASED A NUMBER OF CAGED ANIMALS FROM GOTHAM ZOO.
LATER, WE INTERVIEWED ALLEGED PARTICIPANTS...
HEY COVENTRY, LISTEN UP! YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, MAAN. WE SET A SWAMP JUJU ON YOUR AMERICAN NAZI PARTY ASS.
HAHAHAHAHA!
FORGET YOUR VIGILANTE PACKS. IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE, MAAN!
MEANWHILE, ALLIGATORS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED AS FAR DOWNRIVER AS THE WATERFRONT AREA...
THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE. TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF CIVILIZATION REDUCED TO JUNGLE IN AS MANY MINUTES
GOTHAM'S ALWAYS BEEN A JUNGLE, COMMISSIONER...
NO, IT HASN'T. IT'S TEETERED ON THE BRINK, BUT WE'VE ALWAYS MANAGED TO HOLD IT THERE...
UNTIL NOW. I'M SCARED THE WHOLE PLACE MIGHT BLOW. THIS BUSINESS IS REAWAKENING ALL OF GOTHAM'S BURIED LABELS...

...ALL ITS OLD, DARK INSTINCTS...
3

BULLOCK. COMMISSIONER. I SAW THE SIGNAL.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
NOTHING GOOD, BIG GUY. THE CITY'S GONE CRAZY WITH JUNGLE FEVER. SOME AREAS THEY'RE BARRICADED INDOORS WITH GUNS, OTHER PLACES THEY'RE HAVIN' STREET PARTIES.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S JUST ONE CREATURE DOING ALL THIS...
I MET HIM ONCE. HE WAS NOWHERE NEAR AS POWERFUL THEN. IF I CAN FIND HIM, PERHAPS HE'LL TALK.
BUT EVEN IF YOU GET HIM TO REMOVE THE UNDERGROWTH... I MEAN, WHAT IF THIS HAS GONE TOO FAR?
YOU SEE, HE'S GIVEN GOTHAM A TASTE OF SOME SORT OF SAVAGE EDEN.
WHAT IF THE CITY LIKES IT? SOME PEOPLE OUT THERE ARE ACTING AS IF IT'S A NATURAL-BORN PARADISE..
BUT ALL I CAN SEE IS A GREEN HELL.
SWAMP THING
CREATED BY LEN WEIN AND BERNI WRIGHTSON
the Garden of Earthly Delights
WRITER ALAN MOORE
ARTIST JOHN TOTLEBEN
EDITOR KAREN BERGER
COLORIST TATJANA WOOD
LETTERER JOHN COSTANZA

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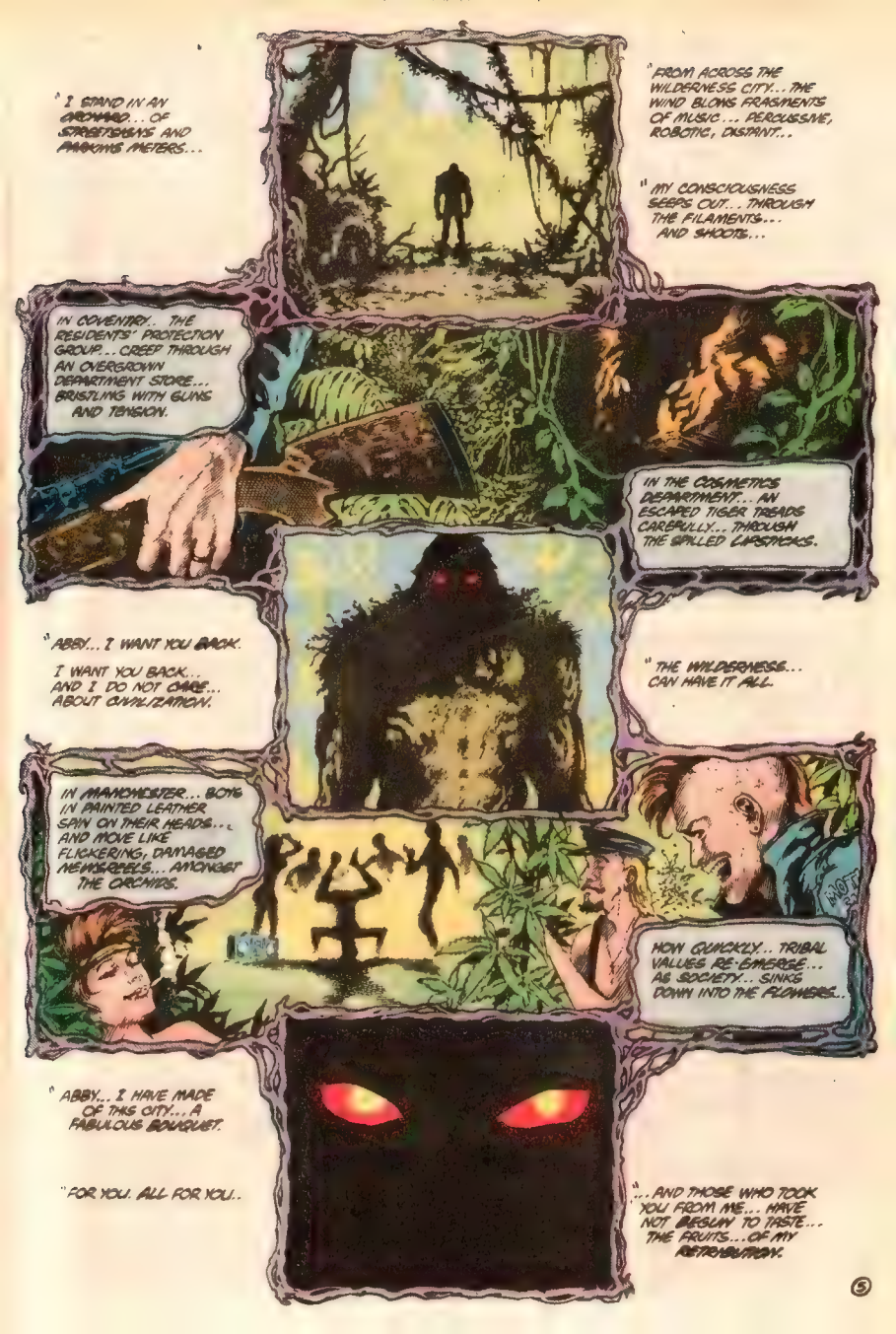
"I STAND IN AN ORCHARD... OF STREETLAMPS AND FLASHING METERS...
"FROM ACROSS THE WILDERNESS CITY... THE WIND BLOWS FRAGMENTS OF MUSIC... PERCUSSIVE, ROBOTIC, DISTANT...
"MY CONSCIOUSNESS SEEPS OUT... THROUGH THE FILAMENTS... AND SHOOTS...
IN COVENTRY... THE RESIDENTS' PROTECTION GROUP... CREEP THROUGH AN OVERGROWN DEPARTMENT STORE... BRISTLING WITH GUNS AND TENSION.
IN THE COSMETICS DEPARTMENT... AN ESCAPED TIGER TREADS CAREFULLY... THROUGH THE SPILLED LIPSTICKS.
"ABBY... I WANT YOU BACK.
I WANT YOU BACK... AND I DO NOT CARE... ABOUT CIVILIZATION.
"THE WILDERNESS... CAN HAVE IT ALL.
IN MANCHESTER... BOYS IN PAINTED LEATHER SPIN ON THEIR HEADS... AND MOVE LIKE FLICKERING, DAMAGED NEWSREELS... AMONGST THE ORCHIDS.
HOW QUICKLY... TRIBAL VALUES RE-EMERGE... AS SOCIETY... SINKS DOWN INTO THE FLOWERS...
"ABBY... I HAVE MADE OF THIS CITY... A FABULOUS BOUQUET.
"FOR YOU. ALL FOR YOU..
"... AND THOSE WHO TOOK YOU FROM ME... HAVE NOT BEGUN TO TASTE... THE FRUITS... OF MY RETRIBUTION.

HEY LOOK! SWEET POTATO! MY WIFE, MAN, SHE'S WEST INDIAN. SHE LOVES SWEET POTATO WE GOTTA GET SOME INTO THE TRUNK.
WE CAN'T. IT'S FULL OF STRAWBERRIES AND PEACHES AND TOMATOES BESIDES, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WORKING.
HOW? WE CAN'T MOVE OUR VEHICLE! YOU OUGHTIA LEARN TO RELAX AND ACCEPT THE INEVITABLE, STAN.
MMM. I DUNNO... IS THIS SWEET POTATO OR NOT?
BICKMEYER, YOU JERK, THIS IS SERIOUS.
SERIOUS? UH, WELL, I DUNNO. IT'S, UH...
IT'S UH...
BICKMEYER, SOCIETY'S COLLAPSING! THAT ESCAPED PYTHON IN THE SUPERMARKET THAT THEY KILLED BY SHUTTING IT IN THE FREEZER... I'D SAY THAT WAS PRETTY SERIOUS, WOULDN'T YOU?... HUH?
BICKMEYER?
STAN?
STAN, YOU LOOK REALLY PRETTY TONIGHT.
6

...IMMEDIATELY TO A HOSPITAL. WE REPEAT: STAY AWAY FROM THE SWEET POTATOES. THEY CONTAIN AN UNIDENTIFIED HALLUCINOGEN, CAPABLE OF CAUSING TERRIFYING VISIONS.
BULLETIN
IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW HAS EATEN THEM, YOU SHOULD GO IMMEDIATELY TO A HOSPITAL.
OH GREAT. NOT ONLY DO WE HAVE A JUNGLE OUT THERE, IT'S A JUNGLE FULLA POTATO HEADS!
YOUR BOYFRIEND GOT ANY MORE CUTE TRICKS UP HIS SLEEVE, MS. CABLE?
ANY MORE LITTLE SURPRISE BUNCHES OF FLOWERS HE'S LIABLE TO PULL OUT?
C'MON... I KNOW YOU'RE NOT ASLEEP. YOUR EYELIDS ARE MOVING.
AH WELL. I GUESS SOMETIMES...
;ORRRP!
...I GUESS SOMETIMES FOLK JUST AIN'T IN THE MOOD FOR REFINED CONVERSATION.
ALEC. OH, I WANT TO BE WITH YOU.
SOON, ABBY. SOON.
CAN WE LIVE NORMALLY TOGETHER? AFTER ALL THIS?
WE'LL FIND A WAY. I PROMISE...
I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU.

I LET HER MIND GO... SLIPPING AWAY... INTO THE DEEP AND SILENT GREEN.
I'VE LEARNED MANY THINGS... FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES... AND MY POWER... IS GREAT. THEY CANNOT... KEEP ME FROM HER.
THEY CANNOT STOP ME.
YOU SEE OUR PROBLEM, MR. LUTHOR? SINCE WE LAST ENCOUNTERED HIM, THE CREATURE'S OBVIOUSLY DISCOVERED NEW ABILITIES.
HE CONTROLS VEGETATION. HE CAN TRAVEL ANYWHERE, INSTANTLY. OUTSIDE CHICAGO RECENTLY, HE APPARENTLY CAUSED AN EARTHQUAKE.
PLUS, HE'S TOTALLY INVULNERABLE.
I OPEN THE THROATS... OF SUBURBAN LAWNS... FILLING THE DRAINED POOLS WITH POPPIES...
A SPLUTTERING RESIDENT... EMPTIES HIS SHOTGUN... INTO THE FLAMEBOARDS... PEELING STRIPS... IN THE SUBSEQUENT RAIN... OF SHREDDED PETALS.
THEY CANNOT HARM ME.
MR. WICKER, BELIEVE ME, YOU DON'T KNOW FROM INVULNERABLE.
I KNOW FROM INVULNERABLE...
...AND THIS REFUGEE FROM A CANNED SWEET-CORN LABEL ISN'T IT.
IN A LATTICE OF GREEN SPARKS... I SHIMMER THROUGH THE TORSOL OF THE PARK... WHERE LEAN CATS... STALK FRUIT-FATTENED BIRDS... AND DRUNKARDS... FALL IN LOVE... AMONGST THE NECTARINES.
THE CITY CANNOT CONTAIN ME.
ACCORDING TO WOODRUE'S MANUAL, THIS CREATURE'S MIND IS ATTUNED TO THE WORLD'S VEGETATION.
IF THREATENED, IT SHIFTS ITS CONSCIOUSNESS TO A BOLT HOLE IN THE UNDERGROWTH.
CHANGE ITS FLAMES, AND YOU CLOSE ITS ESCAPE ROUTE.
8

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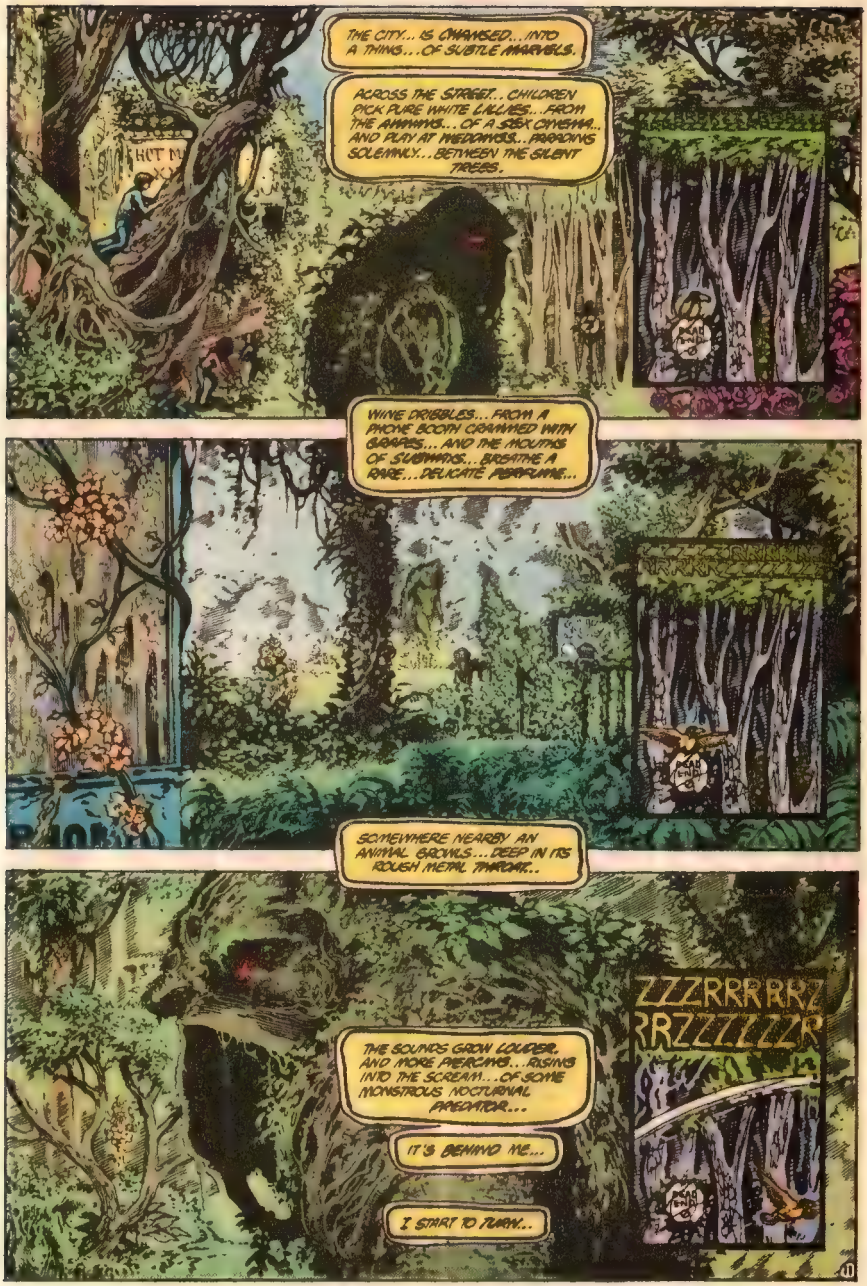
UNIMPEDED... I DANCE ALONG THE CRACKS IN THE SIDEWALKS... MOVING FROM WINDOW BOX... TO WINDOWBOX ... AS IF THEY WERE SUBWAY STATIONS.
UPTOWN... I ERUPT FROM A GRATING... IN A FIREWORK DISPLAY OF CHARTREUSE...
BEAUTIFUL.
INVINCIBLE.
TO CHANGE THE CREATURE'S FREQUENCY, MY PEOPLE SUGGEST AN ORDINARY COMMUNICATIONS SCRAMBLER, MODIFIED LIKE SO.
THEN YOU'LL NEED ONE OF THESE TO FIRE IT FROM, AND THESE SENSORS TO MAKE SURE YOU'VE MAILED HIM.
SO MUCH FOR INVULNERABILITY.
I HAVE BROKEN THE CITY SOFTLY... TOUCHING A FORGOTTEN NERVE IN ITS PEOPLE... WITH GIFTS OF FRUIT... AND SOFT GRASS.
NO PAIN. NO MORE DEATH... OR INJURY... THAN WOULD HAVE OCCURRED NATURALLY...
NO VIOLENCE.
AND THIS WILL KILL IT? JUST LIKE THAT? BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TAKEN TEN MINUTES...
NINE MINUTES AND FIFTEEN SECONDS. I WANTED TO LEAVE YOU ENOUGH TIME TO SIGN AND MAIL MY CHECK. GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN...
... AND GOOD HUNTING.
I SEARCH THE CORNERS... OF GOTHAM'S HEART FOR PURCHASE... RUNNING INVISIBLE FINGERS... OVER THE HARP OF ITS INHABITANTS' MINDS...
SOME SHIVER... AND TURN THE T.V. UP LOUDER... BUT IN SOME... THERE IS A RESONANCE...
A GREAT, YEARNING RESPONSE.
9

OHHHHHHH MAN!
WHEN THEY SAID THE HIGHWAYS LEADING INTO GOTHAM WERE MOSSBOUND THEY WEREN'T KIDDING.
IT... IT DOESN'T MATTER. I HAVE TO GET INTO THE CITY.
YOU, TOO, HUH? I PITCHED UP HERE WHEN I SAW THE MEWS. DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THOSE SWEET PEOPLES?
NO. ONLY WHAT THE CREATURE SAID, ABOUT MANKIND POISONING THE PLANET.
I HAVE TO GET IN. I HAVE TO SEE HIM.
HEAVY ENVIRONMENTAL TRIP, HUH? WELL, I CAN RELATE TO THAT.
NAME'S CHESTER. CHESTER WILLIAMS. PLEASED T'MEETCHA, MR....?
MONROE. WALLACE MONROE. LISTEN, CAN WE GET THROUGH HERE?
WELL, IT'S GONNA BE SOME WALK, BUT YEAH, I GUESS SO.
LOOK AT ALL THESE CARS, MAN. IT'S LIKE SOMETHING BY DALI!
UH... THIS IS A TOLL BOOTH. SHOULDN'T WE LEAVE SOME MONEY OR SOMETHING?
UH, WALLACE, I THINK YOU SHOULD MAYBE TRY TO SEE THIS AS A TOTAL CONCEPT AND DIG ALL THE IMPLICATIONS. I MEAN, I DON'T WANT TO WEIRD YOU OUT OR ANYTHING...
...BUT THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW.


THE CITY... IS CHANGED... INTO A THING... OF SUBTLE MARVELS.
ACROSS THE STREET... CHILDREN PICK PURE WHITE LILLIES... FROM THE AWNINGS... OF A SEEDY CINEMA... AND PLAY AT WEDDINGS... PARODING SOLEMNLY... BETWEEN THE SILENT TREES.
WINE DRIBBLES... FROM A PHONE BOOTH CRAMMED WITH GRAPES... AND THE MOUTHS OF SUBWAYS... BREATHE A RARE... DELICATE PERFUME...
SOMEWHERE NEARBY AN ANIMAL GROWLS... DEEP IN ITS ROUGH METAL THROAT...
THE SOUNDS GROW LOUDER, AND MORE PIERCING... RISING INTO THE SCREAM... OF SOME MONSTROUS NOCTURNAL PREDATOR...
IT'S BEHIND ME...
I START TO RUN...
ZZZRRRRRRZ
RRZZZZZZR

RRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRR
RRGUH-
CHUNK
CAN WE TALK?
12

PERHAPS...
DO YOU INTEND... TO RELEASE MY WIFE...?
UNTIL SHE'S BEEN THROUGH THE JUDICIAL PROCESS, I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. GOTHAM CAN'T SURRENDER TO TERRORISM.
WHEN WE MET BEFORE YOU SEEMED INTELLIGENT AND REASONABLE. I'M ASKING YOU TO GIVE ME MY CITY BACK.
I'M AFRAID... THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE.
AND THAT'S YOUR LAST WORD?
THAT... IS MY LAST WORD.
I SEE.
KLUNK!
THEN WE MAY AS WELL GET THIS OVER WITH.

FFUUSSSHHHH
CAUTION
DEFLUANT
UUAAAARRRRGH
SPLAK
SHLIZIT
SKREKK
14

SHWUFFF
THWK
SPLUKT
PWOOT
UH-OH.

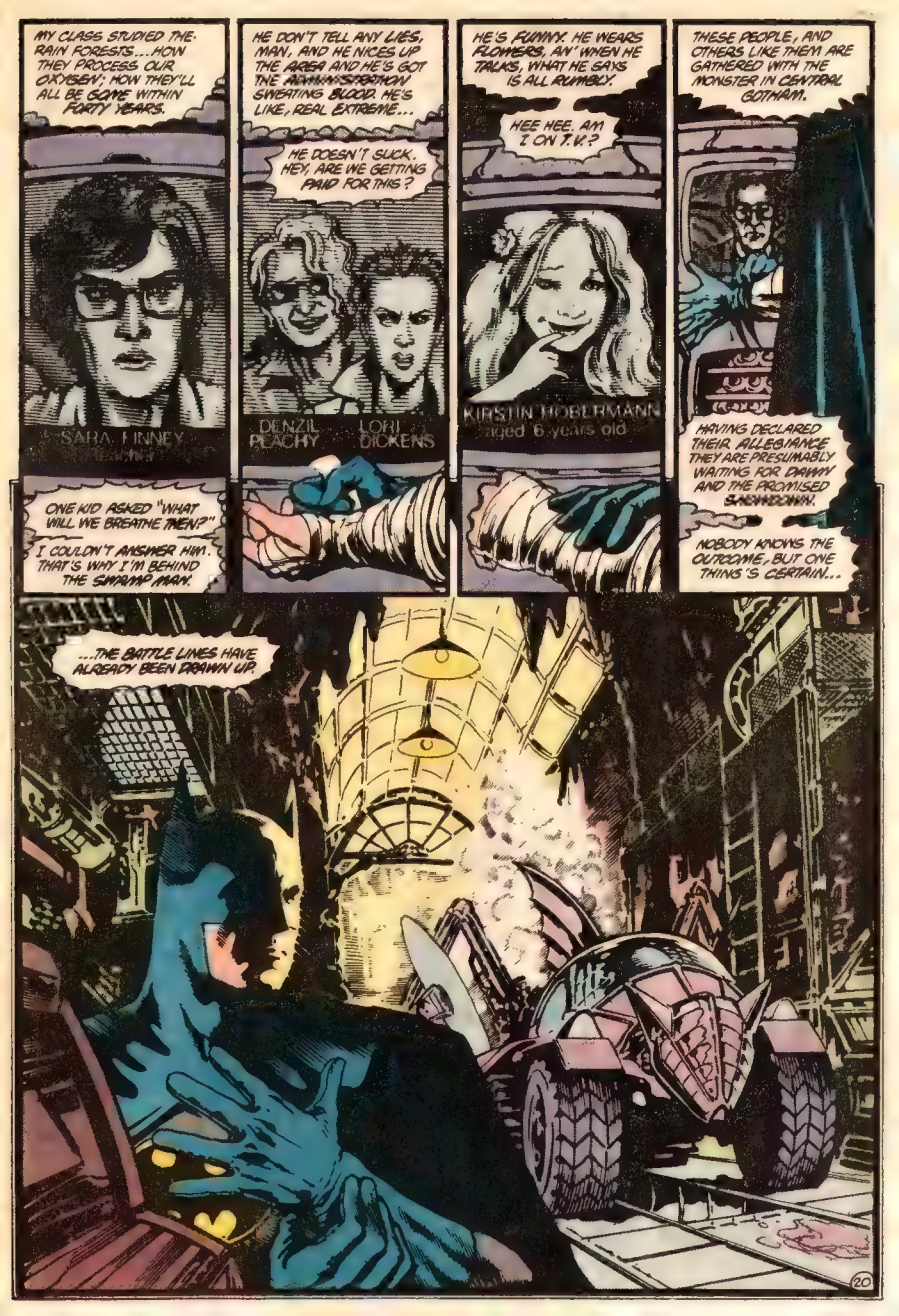
WELL?
HAVE...
...YOU SEEN...
...ENOUGH...?
DO YOU...
...AT LAST...
AAGH
...UNDERSTAND.
...WHAT IT IS...
...THAT YOU.
...ARE FRIGHTENED?
LET YOUR MASTERS KNOW...
...THAT THEIR WEAPONS ARE USELESS...
THEIR TRICKS FUTILE...
NO MORE GAMES.
NO MORE TRICKS.

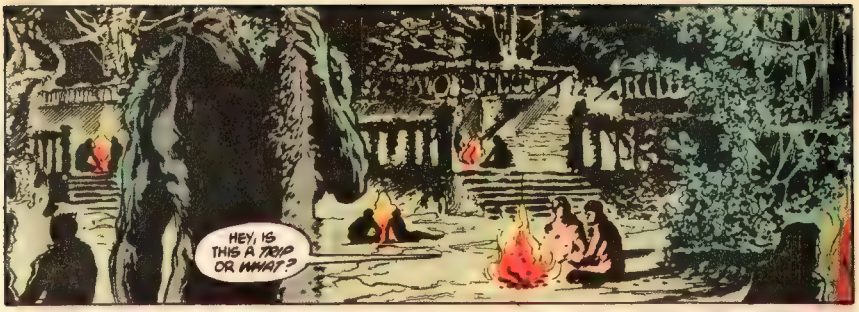
MY WIFE. UNHARMED. NOW.
OR... IT GETS... MUCH WORSE.
LET THEM KNOW.

NOT A WORD. HE WENT OUT AFTER THAT THING AN HOUR AGO, AND SINCE THEN NOT A WORD...
MR. MAYOR, I KNOW HIM. I'M SURE IF THERE'S BEEN A CONFRONTATION WE'LL HEAR SOON ENOUGH...
...ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
"SOON ENOUGH" ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH! MY CITY'S BEING EATEN, AND I WANT...
UH, MR. MAYOR, COMMISSIONER, 'SCUSE ME FOR INNERUPTIN'...
SQUEEEECH
CRETTCHK
KTWEEK
...BUT I THINK WE GOT COMPANY.
OH GOD! SHOOT IT! GORDON, SOMEBODY, SHOOT IT!
HEAR THIS... MEN... OF THE CITY...
GOTHAM... AND GOTHAM'S CHAMPION... HAVE FALLEN... TO THE GREEN.
OH GOD, I THOUGHT IF I HAD THE PLANTS MOVED OUT WE'D BE SAFE HERE...
NOWHERE... IS SAFE.
NO ONE... IS SAFE... UNTIL SHE... IS SAFE... WITH ME.
REMOVE MY WIFE... FROM YOUR PRISONS... OR REMOVE GOTHAM CITY FROM YOUR MAPS.
YOU HAVE UNTIL DAWN.
HE'S GONE.

...GONE FROM THE MARS UNLESS ABISAL CABLE IS RELEASED BY DAWN.
IN A RELATED ITEM, THE SWAMP CREATURE HAS REPORTEDLY ENCOUNTERED THE BATMAN...
.. LEAVING GOTHAM'S FAMOUS MASKED VIGILANTE SEVERELY BRUISED BUT OTHERWISE UNINJURED.
A MORBIDLY SITUATION ...AND PERHAPS THE MOST DISTURBING ASPECT HAS BEEN THE RESPONSE OF GOTHAM'S CITIZENS THEMSELVES.
ACCORDING TO A RANDOM SAMPLING OF PUBLIC OPINION GATHERED EARLIER 30% OF GOTHAM'S CITIZENS FEEL SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS THE SWAMP CREATURE AND HIS CAUSE.
15% ALSO STATED THAT THEY PREFERRED AN OVERSEAS GOTHAM.
IN SHORT, THERE SEEMS TO BE AN ALARMING TREND TOWARDS THE ACCEPTANCE OF THIS CREATURE AS A KIND OF CULT DEITY.
ALREADY "AVENGERS" FROM OUTSIDE THE CITY HAVE BEEN REPORTED HEADING INTO GOTHAM. PICTURES FOLLOW...

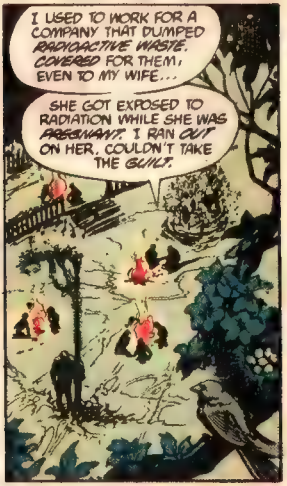
... AND ON G.B.S. TONIGHT WE EXAMINE THE EMERGENCE OF AN OVERNIGHT CULT, ALMOST RELIGIOUS IN ITS DEDICATION.
"WHO ARE 'THE SWAMPIES'? WHAT DO THEY WANT?
"WHAT SHADOWY COMPULSIONS MOTIVATE THEM?"


MY CLASS STUDIED THE RAIN FORESTS...HOW THEY PROCESS OUR OXYGEN; HOW THEY'LL ALL BE GONE WITHIN FORTY YEARS.
SARA FINNEY
ONE KID ASKED "WHAT WILL WE BREATHE THEN?"
I COULDN'T ANSWER HIM. THAT'S WHY I'M BEHIND THE SWAMP MAN.
HE DON'T TELL ANY LIES, MAN, AND HE NICES UP THE ARISA AND HE'S GOT THE ADMINISTRATION SWEATING BLOOD. HE'S LIKE, REAL EXTREME...
HE DOESN'T SUCK. HEY, ARE WE GETTING PAID FOR THIS?
DENZIL PEACHY
LORI DICKENS
HE'S FUNNY. HE WEARS FLOWERS, AN' WHEN HE TALKS, WHAT HE SAYS IS ALL RUMBLY.
HEE HEE. AM I ON T.V.?
KIRSTIN HOBERMANN aged 6 years old
THESE PEOPLE, AND OTHERS LIKE THEM ARE GATHERED WITH THE MONSTER IN CENTRAL GOTHAM.
HAVING DECLARED THEIR ALLEGIANCE THEY ARE PRESUMABLY WAITING FOR DAWN AND THE PROMISED SACRIFICE.
NOBODY KNOWS THE OUTCOME, BUT ONE THING'S CERTAIN...
...THE BATTLE LINES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DRAWN UP.
20


HEY, IS THIS A TRIP OR WHAT?

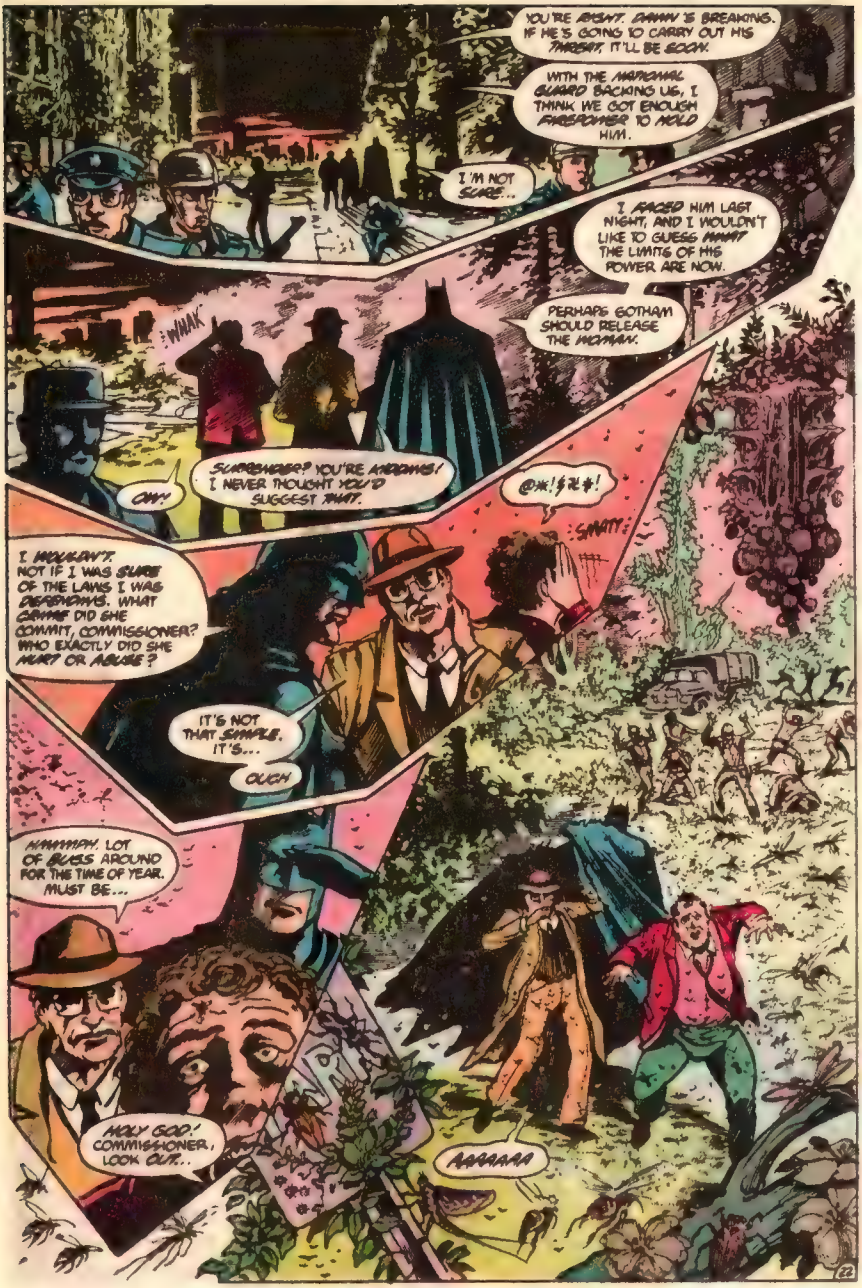
IT'S LIKE PREDESTINATION. SEE, I FOUND ONE OF THE SWAMP GUYS TUBERS MONTHS AGO, BACK IN LOUISIANA.
IT MADE ME DO A LOT OF THINKING, Y'KNOW?
IT'S REALLY VALUABLE TO ME, MAN.

MAYBE MEETING HIM CAN, LIKE, ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS, ABOUT MYSELF.
I MEAN, HOW DOES A GUY KNOW WHETHER HE'S GOOD OR EVIL? YOU EVER WONDER ABOUT THAT STUFF?
I DON'T HAVE TO. I KNOW WHAT I AM.

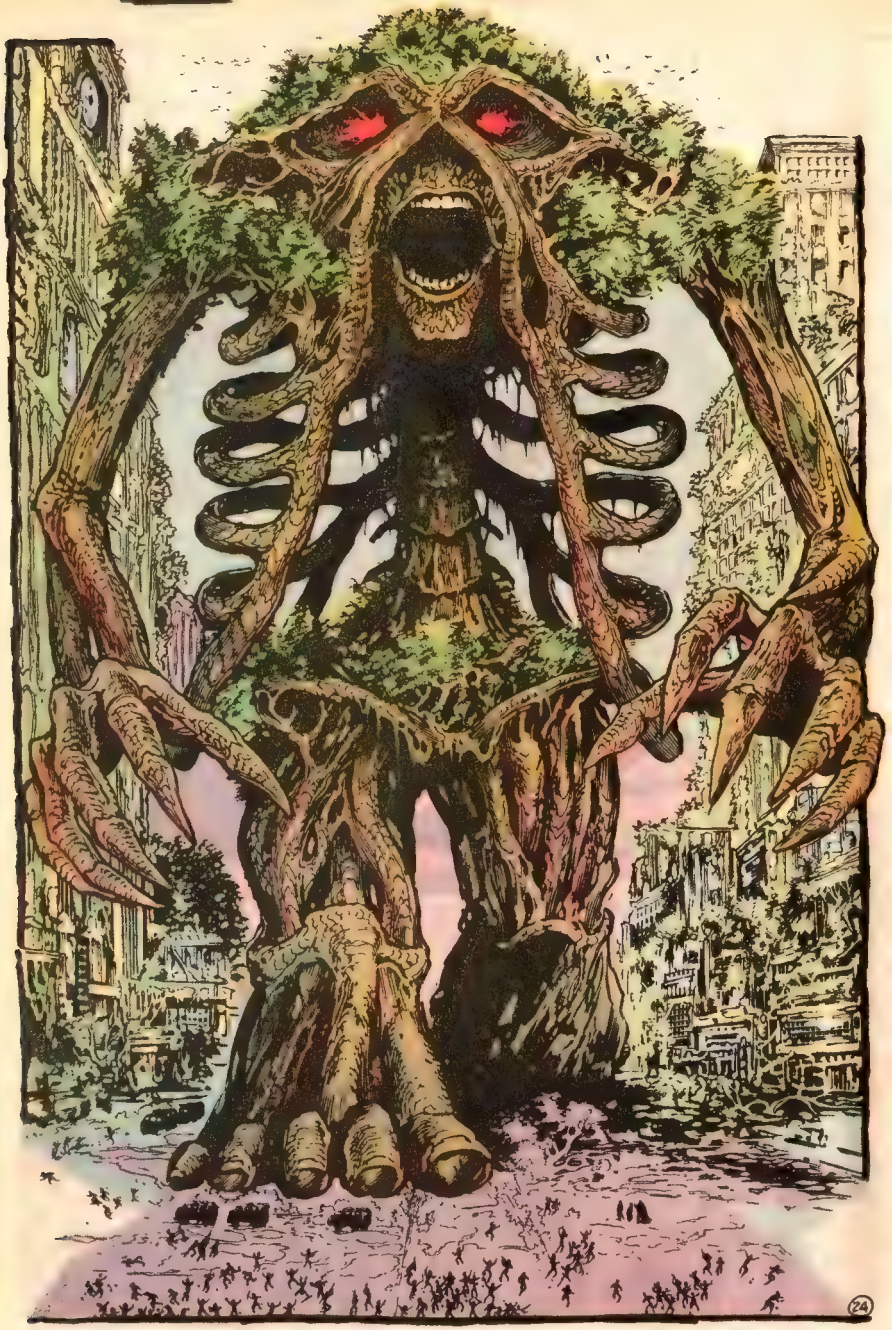

I USED TO WORK FOR A COMPANY THAT DUMPED RADIOACTIVE WASTE. COVERED FOR THEM, EVEN TO MY WIFE...
SHE GOT EXPOSED TO RADIATION WHILE SHE WAS PREGNANT. I RAN OUT ON HER, COULDN'T TAKE THE GUILT.

SINCE THEN, I HEARD THAT THE BABY WAS STILLBORN, AND THAT MY WIFE...
WELL, SHE DOESN'T HAVE LONG TO LIVE. I... I WANT TO GO TO HER, BUT I CAN'T. I CAN'T HELP HER.
I CAN'T OFFER HER ANYTHING.

I WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS, MAN. FOR YOUR WIFE, MAYBE IT'LL HELP YOU WORK SOMETHING OUT.
MAYBE IT'LL HELP US BOTH WORK SOMETHING OUT.
"THERE'S THE FIRST CHINK OF LIGHT..."


YOU'RE RIGHT. ZAHAN'S BREAKING. IF HE'S GOING TO CARRY OUT HIS THREAT, IT'LL BE SOON.
WITH THE NATIONAL GUARD BACKING US, I THINK WE GOT ENOUGH FIREPOWER TO HOLD HIM.
I'M NOT SURE...
I SAW HIM LAST NIGHT, AND I WOULDN'T LIKE TO GUESS WHAT THE LIMITS OF HIS POWER ARE NOW.
PERHAPS GOTHAM SHOULD RELEASE THE HUMAN.
:WHAK
SCARECROW? YOU'RE JOKING! I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D SUGGEST THAT.
OW!
@%!$%#!
:SMITT:
I WOULDN'T. NOT IF I WAS SURE OF THE LAWS I WAS DISPENSING. WHAT CRIME DID SHE COMMIT, COMMISSIONER? WHO EXACTLY DID SHE HURT OR ABUSE?
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. IT'S...
OUCH
HMMMPH. LOT OF BUGS AROUND FOR THE TIME OF YEAR. MUST BE...
HOLY GOD! COMMISSIONER, LOOK OUT..
AAAAAAA

INSECTS. I THOUGHT THE SCENT OF THE FLOWERS SEEMED HEAVIER THIS MORNING. HE'S USING THEIR PHEROMONES TO BRING DOWN A PLAGUE OF BUGS ON GOTHAM.
WE CAN... OHK.. WE CAN MANHOLE BUGS...
...AND IF HE'S USING INSECTS, MAYBE HE'S EXHAUSTED HIS TRICKS WITH PLANTS. MAYBE THE END IS CLOSER THAN WE...
DID YOU FEEL THAT? THE GROUND SHOOK...
SUBWAY TRAIN. LISTEN, YOU'RE RIGHT... HE'S FIGHTING AT A DISADVANTAGE HERE...
I MEAN, GOTHAM'S A CITY. THERE'S ONLY A LIMITED AMOUNT OF VEGETATION FOR HIM TO USE...
WHAT ABOUT THE BOTANICAL GARDENS?
SUBWAY TRAIN? BUT THE LINES ARE ALL BLOCKED BY ROCKS..
BOTANICAL GARDENS?
OF COURSE. THEY HAVE ALMOST EVERY KNOWN SPECIES OF PLANT THERE. POISONOUS ONES LIKE THE HOGWEED, FLESH EATERS LIKE THE SUNDEW. THEY HAVE CACTI!, BELLADONNA...
THAT ISN'T A TRAIN.
...BANYANS, POISON IVY..
HEY! YOU'RE RIGHT! THAT'S NOT A TRAIN. WHAT IS IT? IT FEELS LIKE IT'S GETTING STRONGER...
CAN YOU HEAR THAT NOISE? LIKE THUNDER, BENEATH THE GROUND...
...REDWOODS..
OH JEEZ.



YOU THOUGHT... THAT IT COULD NOT... GET WORSE. YOU IMAGINED... THAT THINGS... HAD REACHED THEIR LIMITS.
DO NOT... DELUDE YOURSELVES...
THERE ARE... NO LIMITS.
WHEREVER VEGETATION DWELLS... THERE I DWELL ALSO. THERE ARE PLANTS... IN YOUR RESERVOIRS...
THERE IS FLORA... IN THE HUMAN INTESTINAL TRACK...
DO NOT... TEMPT ME.
FOR THE LAST TIME: I...WANT...MY... WIFE.
NO MORE DELAYS.
NO MORE TALK.
SHRUUTTMM
GET BACK! HE'S ABANDONED THE BODY. THERE'S NOTHING HOLDING IT UP!
AAAA! OUTTA MY WAY!
JIM, I WANT TO TALK TO THE MAYOR...
NOW.

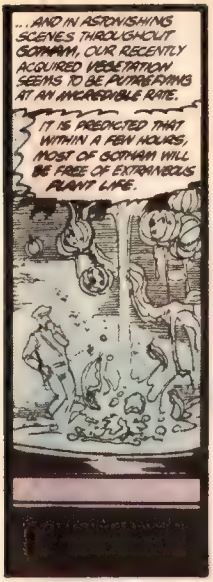
BULLETIN
...WITH THE INSECT PLAGUE GROWING MORE INTENSE AND WITH INCREASING NUMBERS OF CITIZENS SUCCUMBING TO AMALUCINOGENIC POISONS, THE SITUATION IN GOTHAM IS DETERIORATING RAPIDLY.
ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF GOTHAM PARK, NEARBY RESIDENTS REPORT THAT AN ABNORMALLY LARGE SUNDEW REPTARD HAS EATEN TWO DOMESTIC CATS...
YOU SEE? YOU SEE HOW IT IS?
POLICE HAVE WARNED PARENTS TO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN INDOORS...
HOW CAN WE JUST PARODY THE WOMAN AFTER HER BOYFRIEND'S DONE ALL THIS?
I MEAN, REALLY, LISTEN...
YOU! LISTEN!
I LISTEN... TO A CITY THAT HAS NOT KNOWN SILENCE... SINCE THE COMING OF THE AUTOMOBILE...
THE CARS ARE DEAD NOW... AND WIND STRUMS THE HIGH BRANCHES.
DUMBSTRUCK, GOTHAM CONSIDERS ITS FATE...

THAT CREATURE HASN'T DONE A FRACTION OF WHAT IT COULD DO, AND AS YET IT'S DONE NOTHING IRREVERSIBLE.
IF HE STARTS FORCING THE GROWTH OF PEOPLE'S INTESTINAL FLORA, THAT MIGHT BE A DIFFERENT STORY.
TRY TO IMAGINE IT, MR. MAYOR.... STRONG SHOOTS AND WRITHING TENDRILS WORKING THEIR WAY OUT OF YOUR STOMACH, CREEPING UP YOUR THROAT, FILLING YOUR MOUTH.
BATMAN, TAKE IT EASY...
TAKE IT EASY?
WHILE MY CITY IS DYING BECAUSE IT INSISTS ON THE LETTER OF THE LAW OVER LOVE AND JUSTICE?
GOT
MY CITY, JIM...
...DYING WHERE IT STANDS.
SHRIIIP
FROM THE CHILL CITY GRANITE... COLD AS CORPSE-FLESH... LIFE EXPLODES... LIKE BATTLEFIELD POPPIES...
BUT THE BATTLE... IS OVER. THE WAR... IS WON.
GOTHAM... JUST HASN'T REALIZED IT YET.

LET ME ASSERT MYSELF: EITHER WE FIND SOME WAY TO RELEASE THE CABLE WOMAN, OR WE BEGIN EVACUATION RIGHT AWAY.
THERE ARE NO OTHER OPTIONS. THAT THING OUT THERE IS VERY NEARLY A GOD. IT CAN CRUSH US.
B-BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. THAT WOMAN HAS HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMETHING THAT ISN'T HUMAN. WE CAN'T MAKE EXCEPTIONS TO THE LAW..
NO EXCEPTIONS. I SEE.
IN THAT CASE I SUGGEST YOU START ROUNDING UP ALL THE OTHER NON-HUMAN BEINGS WHO MAY BE HAVING RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THEIR SPECIES.
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN, IF YOU WANT TO TAKE THIS ALL THE WAY, NOW-HUMANITY DOESN'T END WITH THE SWAMP THING. LET ME SEE...
YOU'LL POSSIBLY HAVE TO ARREST ARRAKNOAH.. AND METAMORPHO..
I HAVE CHANGED THEIR WORLD.. AND THEIR GREATEST LEGENDS... COULD NOT STAND AGAINST ME.
AMIDST THE FIERCE JOY OF VICTORY.. SOMETHING DARK FLUTTERS ACROSS MY MIND... AND IS GONE...
SOMETHING ABOUT POWER..
28

...AND THERE'S ALSO STARFIRE, FROM THE TITANS. HER RACE EVOLVED FROM CARS, I BELIEVE...
THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER, OBVIOUSLY. CAPTAIN ATOM
...AND THEN OF COURSE THERE'S WHAT'S-HIS-NAME...
THE ONE WHO LIVES IN METROPOLIS
OH GOD. I HADN'T THOUGHT. I DIDN'T REALIZE...
HELLO? HELLO, CARRIE? CAN YOU PUT THROUGH A CALL TO MARSHINSTOW, PLEASE?
YES, YES, IT IS PRETTY URGENT...
MY DOUBTS VANISH... MELTING INTO THE FROSTED MORNING GRASS...
SOMETHING HAS CHANGED. THE CITY... HAS RELAXED... THE FIGHT GONE FROM IT. THE BATTLE... IS OVER. THE WAR... IS WON.
NOW... I HAVE ONLY... TO WAIT.

BE OUTSIDE THE COURT BUILDING IN AN HOUR. ALL CHARGES HAVE BEEN DROPPED, ON ORDERS FROM WASHINGTON.
THEY'RE LETTING HER GO.
YOU'VE WON.
BUT IF YOU EVER DO THIS TO MY CITY AGAIN...
...THEN I'LL KILL YOU.
YES...
YES... I DO BELIEVE... THAT YOU MIGHT.


...AND IN ASTONISHING SCENES THROUGHOUT GOTHAM, OUR RECENTLY ACQUIRED VEGETATION SEEMS TO BE PUTREFYING AT AN INCREDIBLE RATE.
IT IS PREDICTED THAT WITHIN A FEW HOURS, MOST OF GOTHAM WILL BE FREE OF EXTRANEOUS PLANT LIFE.

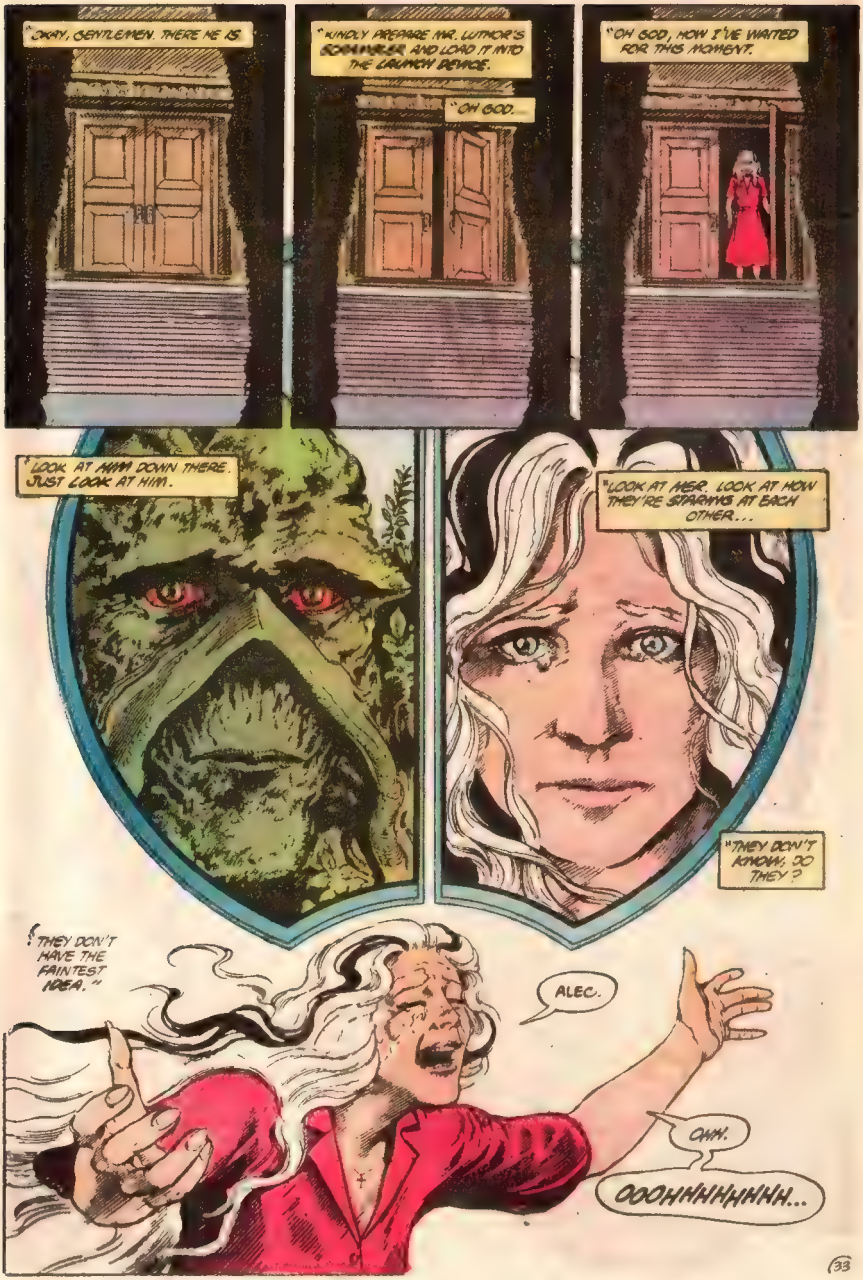
APART FROM SOME RELATIVELY MINOR STRUCTURAL DAMAGE, THE RECENT TROUBLES ARE EXPECTED TO LEAVE FEW LASTING SCARS.
IT SEEMS THAT THIS REVERSAL WAS BROUGHT ABOUT AFTER NEGOTIATIONS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL CONCERNING THE ABIGAIL CABLE CASE.
GRIK

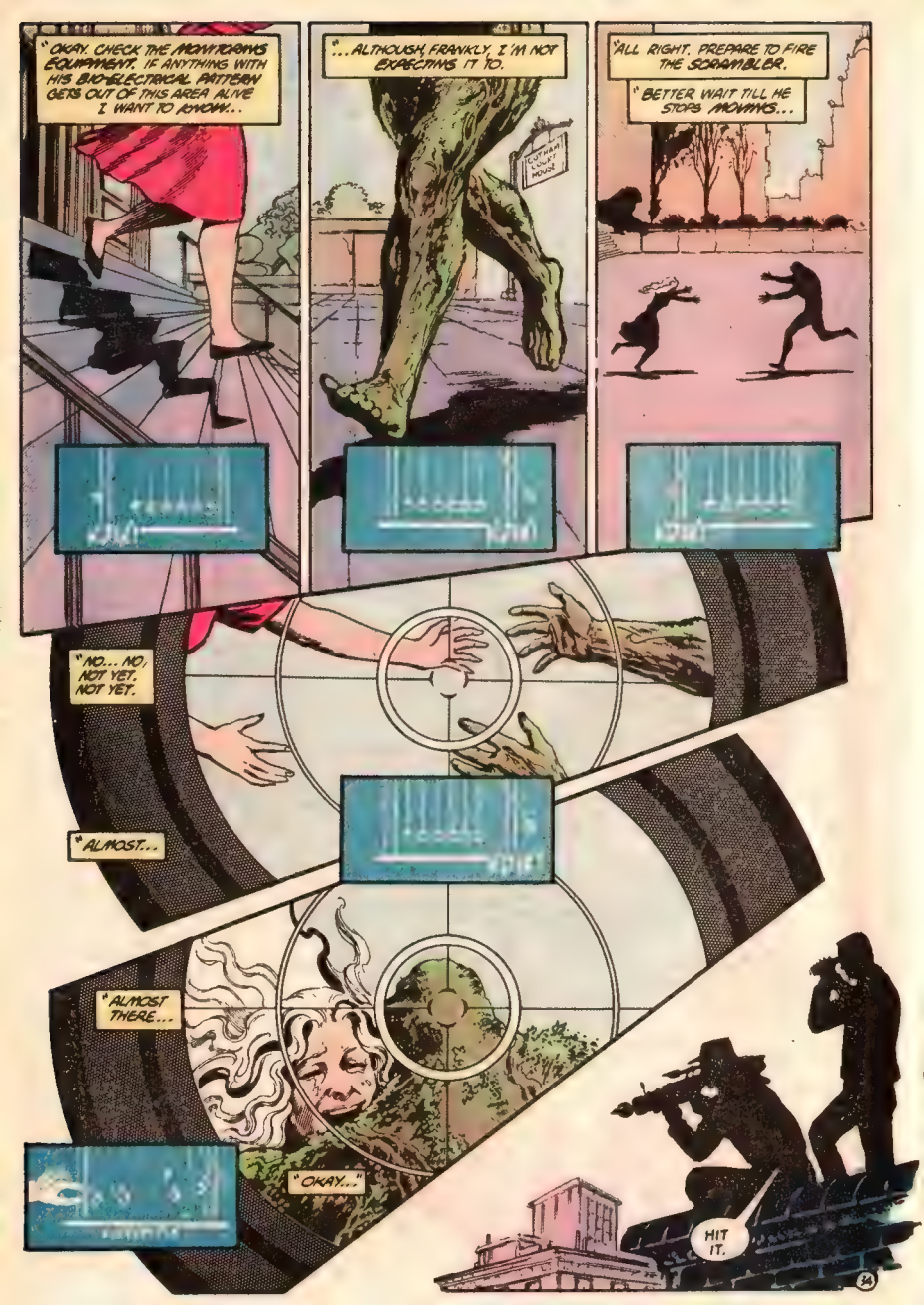
MS. CABLE IS TO BE RELEASED FROM CUSTODY IN AN HOUR'S TIME. ALL CHARGES AGAINST HER HAVING BEEN DROPPED.
IT'S UNDERSTOOD THAT SHE'LL BE HANDED OVER TO THE SWAMP CREATURE OUTSIDE GOTHAM'S COURT BUILDINGS.
CAUTION
HAND

...AFTER WHICH, BOTH ARE EXPECTED TO LEAVE THE CITY PEACEFULLY.
CAUTION
NAPALM
EXPLOSIVES
A PRODUCT OF
AKA
CHIK

NOT ON YOUR LIFE, FRIEND.
NOT ON YOUR LIFE.
SWAMP THING

...AND THE ATMOSPHERE HERE OUTSIDE THE COURT-ROOM IS ELECTRIC. IN TWO MINUTES TIME, THE DOORS WILL OPEN AND ABIGAIL CABLE WILL WALK OUT A FREE WOMAN.
POLICE ARE HOLDING BACK THE CROWD, BUT OVERALL THINGS ARE QUIET AND THE MOOD IS ONE OF TENSE ANTICIPATION.
SHPLUK!
WILL THE SWAMP CREATURE ARRIVE? DOES HE EXIST? DESPITE RECENT EVENTS, MANY PEOPLE INSIST THAT THE SWAMP MAN IS A CREATION OF THE MEDIA.
KWELK FLEK GLI
WELL, FROM WHERE THIS REPORTER IS STANDING, I CAN ONLY SAY THA...
WOAARGH!
GLUGGUSH
FLORP
72
CONTINUED ON 34TH PAGE FOLLOWING


"OKAY, GENTLEMEN. THERE HE IS.
"KINDLY PREPARE MR. LUTHOR'S SCRAMVIRUS AND LOAD IT INTO THE LAUNCH DEVICE.
"OH GOD.
"OH GOD, HOW I'VE WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT.
"LOOK AT HIM! DOWN THERE. JUST LOOK AT HIM.
"LOOK AT HER. LOOK AT HOW THEY'RE SPARKING AT EACH OTHER...
"THEY DON'T KNOW! SO THEY?
"THEY DON'T HAVE THE FAINTEST IDEA."
ALEC.
OHH.
OOOHHHHHHHHH...


"OKAY. CHECK THE MONITORING EQUIPMENT. IF ANYTHING WITH HIS BIOELECTRICAL PATTERN GETS OUT OF THIS AREA ALIVE I WANT TO KNOW...
"...ALTHOUGH, FRANKLY, I'M NOT EXPECTING IT TO.
GOTHAM COURT HOUSE
"ALL RIGHT. PREPARE TO FIRE THE SCRAMBLER.
"BETTER WAIT TILL HE STOPS MOVING...
"NO... NO, NOT YET. NOT YET.
"ALMOST...
"ALMOST THERE...
"OKAY..."
HIT IT.
24

PTUUM
AAA!
WH...?
ALEC? OH GOD, WHAT'S HAPPENING? YOU'RE SHOT!
SOMEBODY SHOT YOU...
UHHHHSHH...
GLH...
A-ABBY... SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME...
NERVES...ALL JUMBLED UP... CAN'T CONTROL... MMSLH...
ALEC, GET OUT! GET OUT OF THAT BODY AND GET AWAY!
YES. I... NO. NO. WHAT'S WRONG? I...
...CAN'T...
...GET...
...OUT.
HE'S REELING.
LOAD THE NAPALM.

ABBY.. GET AWAY FROM ME...
SOMETHING BAD COMING...CAN FEEL IT..
ALEC, NO!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE SWAMPY MAN? HE'S ALL FALLING DOWN. IS HE GONNA HURT HIMSELF?
OH JESUS, SWAMP GUY. THEY SET YOU UP, MAN.
OH GOD, SOMEBODY MAKE THIS NOT HAPPEN...
"FIRE NAPALM."
NO! NO NO NO!
MY NAME... WAS ALEC HOLLAND.
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

I WOKE UP IN THE LAB... AND THERE WAS A BOMB TAPED... BENEATH THE TABLE.
...AND I REACHED OUT.. TO DEFUSE IT..:
...AND I WAS TOO LATE...
...AND I BURNED...
...BURNED TO DEATH.
LET ME GO! LET ME GOOOOO...
ABOVE THE PAIN... ABOVE THE CRACKLING AND SPITTING... I HEAR THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES...
POWER? POWER IS NOT THE THING. TO BE CALM WITHIN ONESELF, THAT IS THE WAY OF THE WOOD.
POWER TEMPTS ANSER...
"AND ANSER IS LIKE WILDFIRE."
OH, ABBY.
ABBY, I LOVE...
MONITORS SHOW NO SIGN OF ABNORMAL BIO-ELECTRIC ACTIVITY WITHIN A THOUSAND MILES, SIR.
HE DIDN'T GET OUT.

"WE GOT HIM."
NEXT?

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
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SWAMP THING
WINNER OF FOUR 1985 EAGLE AWARDS!
SPACE CLUSTERS is coming!
by ALAN MOORE, RICK VEITCH & ALFREDO ALCALA

"ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON IS THE HORROR IN OUR LIVES, DENNIS. THAT'S ALL. THAT'S WHAT HOLDS US TOGETHER."

THE VOICE IN HER HEAD STARTLES HER..

...NOT LEAST BECAUSE IT'S HERS.

HAD SHE REALLY SAID THAT? REALLY MANAGED TO ASSEMBLE SUCH FORCEFUL, CONFIDENT WORDS SUCH LONG SENTENCES?

HOW LONG AGO? WHY RECALL IT NOW?

HE'S BEEN AWAY THREE DAYS. THE SILENCE MAKES HER JUMPY.

THAT'S ALL.

ANOTHER HUMAN VOICE WOULD BE SUCH COMFORT. PERHAPS, IF SHE WAS VERY CAREFUL, SHE COULD SWITCH ON THE...

NO. NO, HE'D WARNED HER ABOUT THAT. SOCKETS WERE FULL OF DANGEROUS ELECTRICITY.

IT KILLED THOUSANDS EVERY YEAR.

BUT TO HEAR SOMEONE TALKING. SOMEONE OTHER THAN DENNIS...

PERHAPS IF SHE HAD INSULATION. THERE ARE RUBBER GLOVES OVER IN THE DARK KITCHEN AND OVEN GLOVES. THOSE ARE PRETTY THICK, TOO. PERHAPS IF SHE WORE BOTH...

SHE SITS FOR FORTY MINUTES, SICK WITH INDECISION, HANDS CLAMMY INSIDE HER GLOVES. EVENTUALLY, EYES SCREWED SHUT, SHE TOUCHES THE PLUG.

NO FLASH, NO LETHAL SURGE OF CURRENT.

ENCOURAGED, DECIDING TO FIT PLUG TO WALL SOCKET TAKES ONLY FIFTEEN MINUTES.

G-2757

THE SET BURSTS INTO BABBLING LIFE.

HALF EXPECTING AN EXPLOSION, SHE SCRABBLES BACK ACROSS THE ROOM, THE TOWELING SHE WEARS INSTEAD OF UNDERCLOTHES CHAFING HER LEGS AS SHE GOES.

"ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON IS THE HORROR..."

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DC Comics Inc A Warner Communications Company

IT'S THE NEWS. SOMETHING ABOUT A PLANE CRASH (SHE IMAGINES TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE SCREAMING ALL THE WAY DOWN), SOMETHING ABOUT DEFENSE SPENDING AND THEN...

...AND THEN THERE IS A DEAD WOMAN ON HER T.V.

...ALL CHARGES AGAINST HER DROPPED. MRS. GAIL CABLE HAS RETURNED TO HOUMA, LOUISIANA.

SADLY SHAKEN AFTER THE DEATH OF HER REPUTED LOVER THE SWAMP MAN MRS. CABLE TOLD REPORTERS THAT SHE NEEDED TIME TO THINK.

REGARDING THE CREATURE'S DEATH, AN ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMAN HAS SAID THAT RUMORS OF GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE KILLING ARE UNFOUNDED AND UNSUPPORTABLE.

MEANWHILE, IN EL SALVADOR...

ABBY. ABBY CABLE.

BUT SHE'S DEAD.

DENNIS SAID SO.

SUNDERLAND. SUNDERLAND HAD KILLED ABBY AND MATT AND THE SWAMP THING NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO AND HAUNTED HER AND DENNIS EVER SINCE.

THAT'S WHY THEY HAD TO HIDE; WHY SHE COULDN'T GO OUT. DENNIS HAD INSISTED...

HE WOULDN'T LIE TO HER. HE LOVED HER; BROUGHT HER FLOWERS...

"ALL WE HAVE IS EACH OTHER NOW, LIZ."

HE'D SAID THAT.

"ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON IS THE HORROR IN OUR LIVES."

SHE'D SAID THAT.

DONNING THE OVEN GLOVES, SHE SWITCHES OFF THE T.V. AND THEN, FEELING GUILTY, FETCHES THE MAP BOOK FROM HIS PRIVATE BUREAU.

ROAD ATLAS

TAKING A CRAYON SHE DRAWS A CIRCLE AROUND HOUMA WITHOUT REALLY UNDERSTANDING WHY.

HOUMA

Thibodaux

Raceland

Golden Meadow

Larose

Cut Off

Galliano

Lockport

Mathews

Pierre Part

Chackbay

Napoleonville

Donaldsonville

Gonzales

Prairieville

Plaquemine

Jeanerette

Franklin

Morgan City

Amelia

Berwick

Patterson

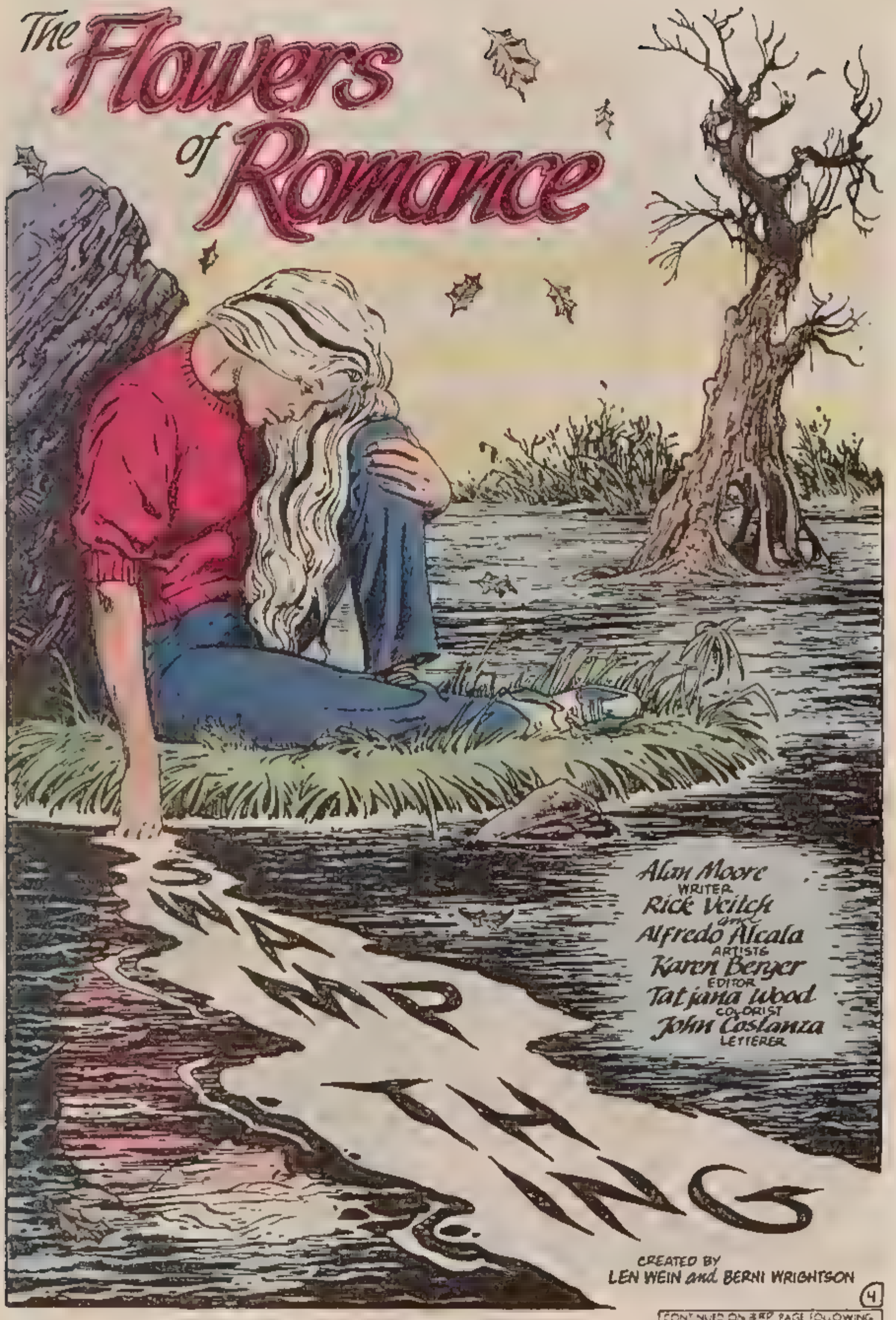
Bayou Vista

Ashland

Bayou

2

AFTER THAT SHE DECIDES TO HAVE A BATH. THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE USUALLY DO JUST BEFORE THEY GO.
NO
NO. DON'T EVEN THINK IT
NOT YET.
SHE RUNS THE WATER. JUST A FEW INCHES DEEP AND STANDS RATHER THAN SITS AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST DROWNING IN THE TUB.
THREE DOZEN PEOPLE EVERY WEEK. ACCORDING TO DENNIS.
DRESSING SHE TRIES TO REMEMBER WHAT PEOPLE NEED WHEN THEY'RE PLANNING AN... EXCURSION.
MONEY SHE REMEMBERS THAT THEY NEED MONEY.
HIS WALLET LIES ON THE BEDSIDE TABLE
HEART POUNDING SHE COUNTS.
NEARLY FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS
SHE PUTS ON HER COAT LOOKS AT THE DOOR. TAKES HER COAT OFF. FIDGETS FOR A WHILE. PUTS IT ON AGAIN.
SHE CAN'T REALLY BE THINKING OF.
NOT SERIOUSLY PLANNING
DENNIS PROTECTS HER. LOVES HER...
SHE TRIES TO SUMMON A CONVINCING IMAGE OF THAT LOVE. MOSTLY, IT ONLY HAPPENED WHEN THEY WERE IN BED. BUT HE HAD BROUGHT HER FLOWERS...
MONTHS AGO.
ALL DEAD NOW.
PERISHED IN THE STUFFY DARKNESS.
THERE ARE FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS IN HIS WALLET.
THERE ARE PETALS CURLED LIKE GORGEOUS MAGGOTS IN THE DUST ON THE COFFEE TABLE.
AFTER A WHILE, LIZABETH TREMAYNE ACTUALLY GOES OUT, SHIVERING, INTO THE FORGOTTEN SUNSHINE.
HOUMA
3



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MS. CABLE, THE CITY'S ARRANGING A *FUNERAL SERVICE* FOR YOUR *LOVED ONE*. WE'D BE HAPPY TO PAY YOUR *TRAVEL EXPENSES* FROM LOUISIANA.

AT LEAST *CONSIDER* IT. I REALIZE THAT RIGHT NOW YOU'RE FEELING PRETTY *SHATTERED*...

I KNOW YOU MUST *HATE* ME. BUT PLEASE *LISTEN*...

YOUR *BEREAVEMENT* NEEDN'T *DESTROY* YOU. IN *TIME* IT CAN EVEN MAKE YOU *STRONGER*. BUT ALL THAT STARTS WITH *ONE THING*: *ACCEPTANCE*.

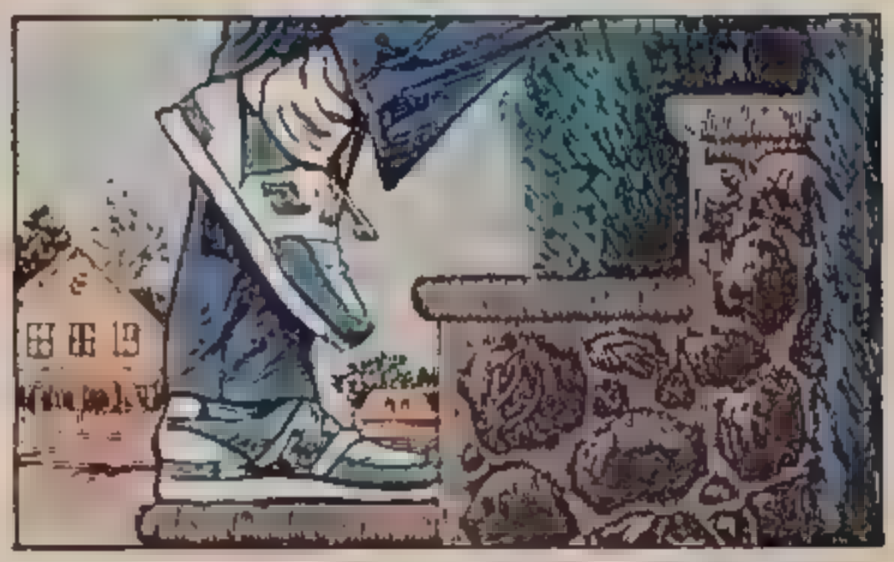
HE'S GONE.

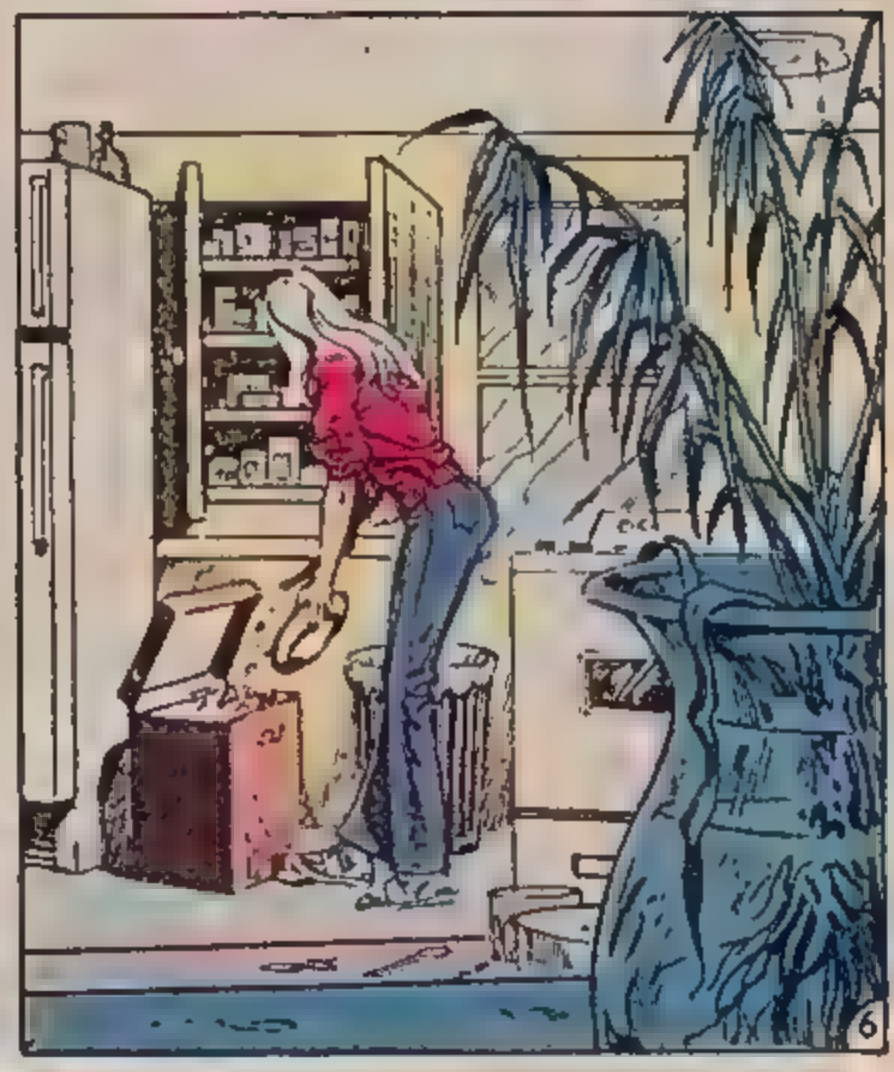
MS. CABLE? CHESTER *WILLIAMS*. I GOT TO MEET THE *SWAMP GUY* BEFORE... WELL, YOU KNOW... AND I WANT TO CARRY ON HIS WHOLE *TRIP* LIKE WITH AN *ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP* OR SOMETHING.

ANYWAY, I LIVE IN *BATON ROUGE*. HERE'S MY *NUMBER*, IF YOU'RE *INTERESTED*.

CHESTER WILLIAMS
318-
876
46

NO MORE CHERNOBYLS

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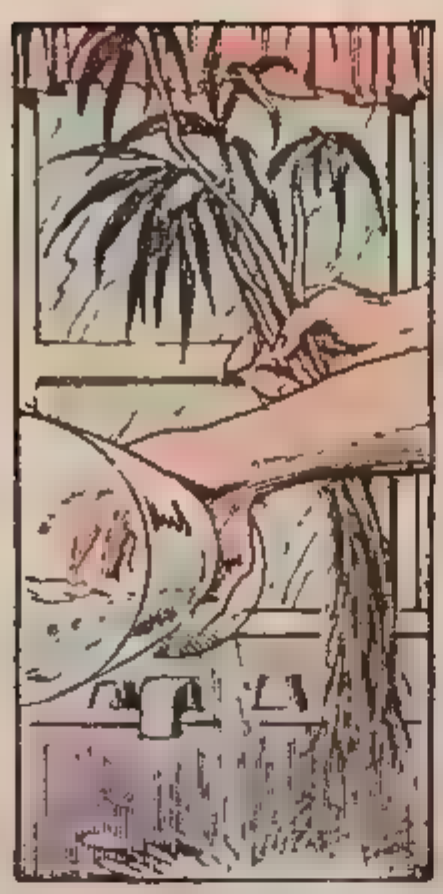
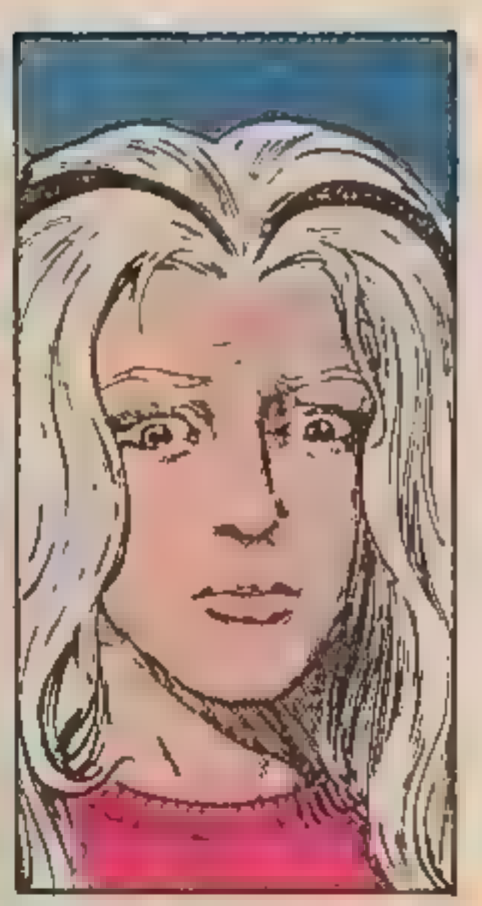
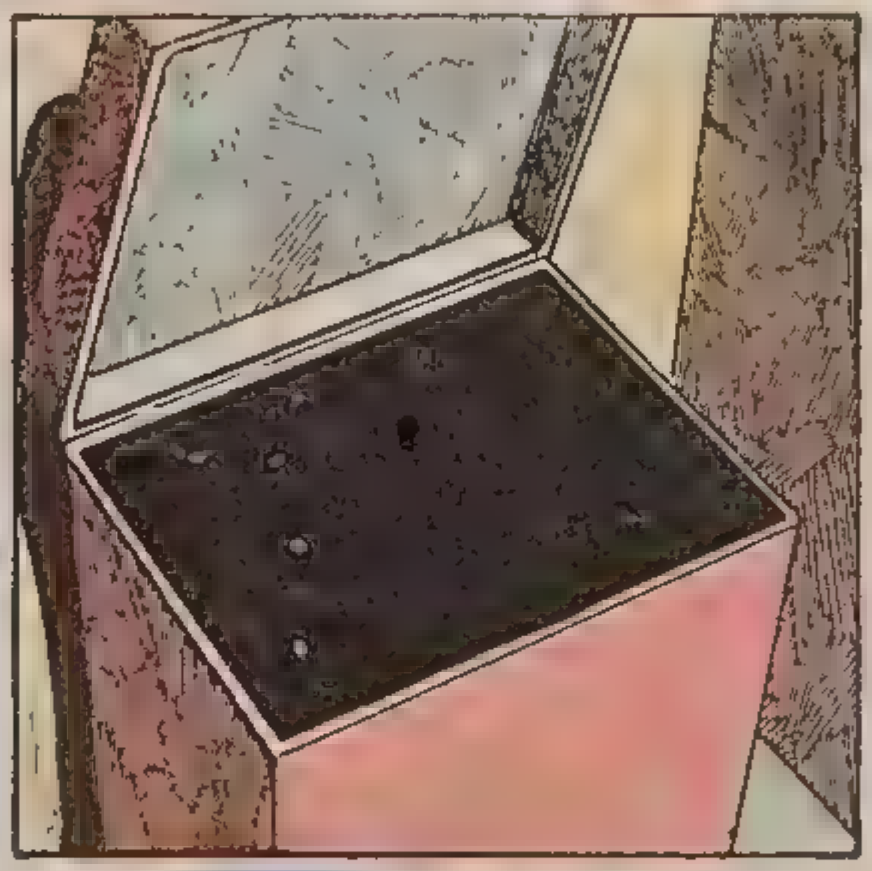
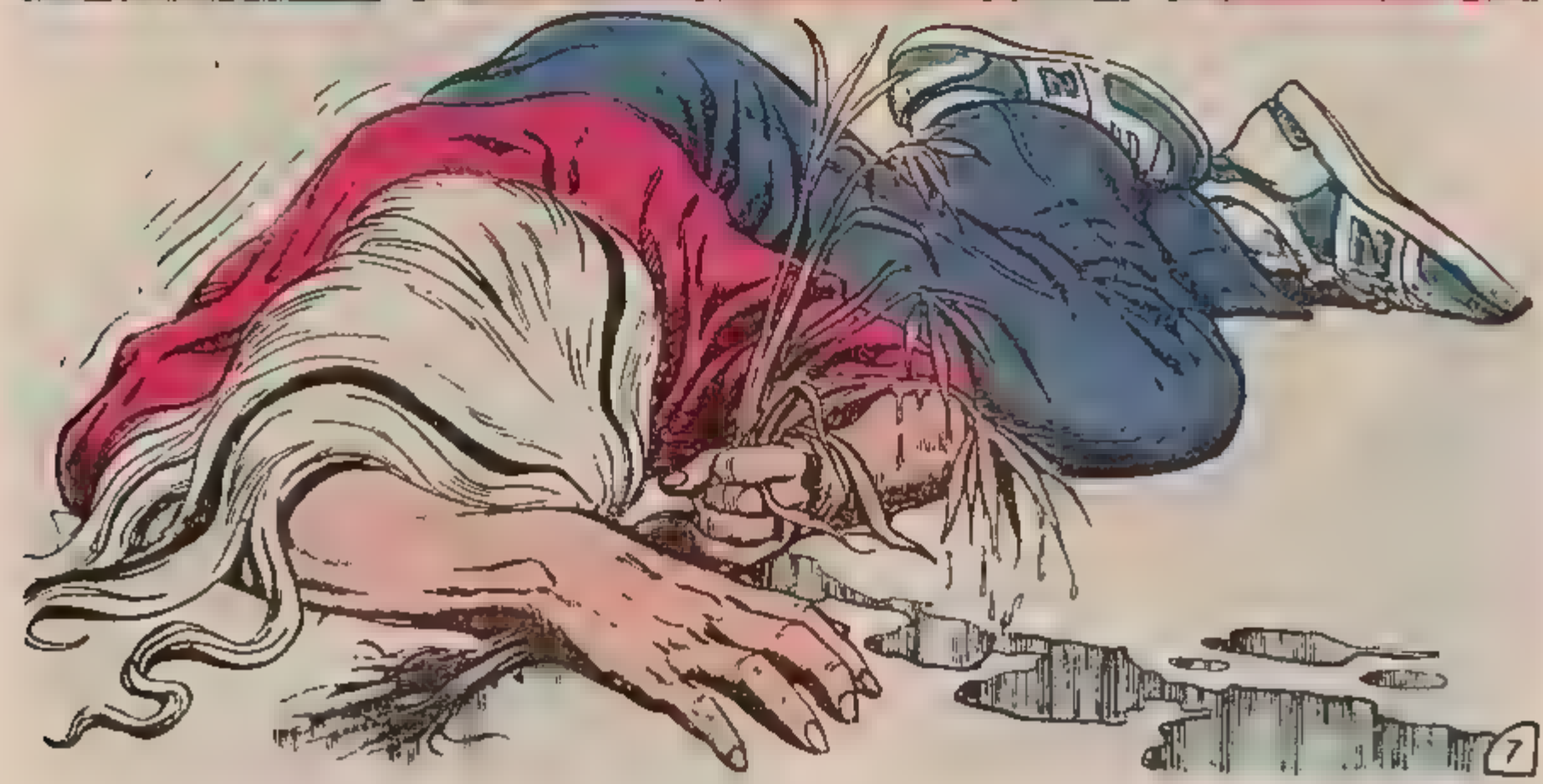








THE WOMAN IN THE NEXT SEAT PASSES HER ANOTHER SNAPSHOT AND BEAMS. WITH SUCH A LARGE FAMILY, HOW CAN SHE BE LONELY ENOUGH TO SPILL HER LIFE SO EAGERLY INTO A STRANGER'S LAP?

UNNOTICED, THE BUS CROSSES THE LOUISIANA STATE LINE.

TO HER SURPRISE SHE SURVIVES THE BUS RIDE.

HARDWAR

AFTERNOON SHADOWS HANG HEAVY OUTSIDE THE DEPOT. FROM A CAFÉ JUKEBOX, JOHNNIE ALLAN ASKS SOMEONE TO TELL THE FOLKS BACK HOME THAT IT'S THE PROMISED LAND CALLING, AN ACCORDION REELING BEHIND HIM.

TRAVELING TO HOUMA, GAZING FROM THE CAB WINDOW INTO STEAMING GRAY LIMBO, SHE REMEMBERS COMING HERE BEFORE, TO RESEARCH HER BOOK ON THE SWAMP MAN.

HER BOOK. SHE'D ACTUALLY WRITTEN A BOOK. IT HAD HER NAME ON THE SPINE.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

SHE WALKS THE LAST FEW BLOCKS. AN OLD MAN IS BURNING LEAVES AND SHE RECALLS THE NEWS FOOTAGE OF THE SWAMP MAN'S DEATH.

FLAILING, LIMBS AFLAME, MOUTH OPENING IN A SCREAM, DYING AGAIN AND AGAIN, EVERY HOUR, ON THE HOUR

SHE'D BEEN LUCKY, GETTING THE ADDRESS FROM THE FIRST LOCAL SHE APPROACHED. THEY ASKED IF SHE WAS A REPORTER AND SHE ALMOST SAID YES BEFORE REMEMBERING THAT SHE WASN'T ANYMORE.

CABLE

NERVING HERSELF TO TOUCH THE ELECTRIC DOORBELL TAKES TWENTY MINUTES.

DRRRRIIIINNGGG

ABBY?

LIZ?

LIZ TREMAYNE? BUT WHAT ARE YOU... I MEAN, I THOUGHT YOU WERE...

OH GOD, I'M SCARY. WHY AM I STANDING HERE TALKING TO YOU ON THE DOORSTEP?

"COME IN COME RIGHT ON IN.."

THERE... SIT DOWN, AND LET ME STRAIGHTEN THIS PLACE UP.

LIZ, THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE. WE THOUGHT SUNDERLAND GOT YOU IN WEST VIRGINIA!

WE...WE THOUGHT THE SAME ABOUT YOU. SUNDERLAND'S HOUNDED DENNIS AND ME EVER SINCE.

"THESE LAST TWO YEARS WE'VE BEEN IN HIDING. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR ME TO GO OUT. MY LIFE, IT'S BEEN SO LONELY.

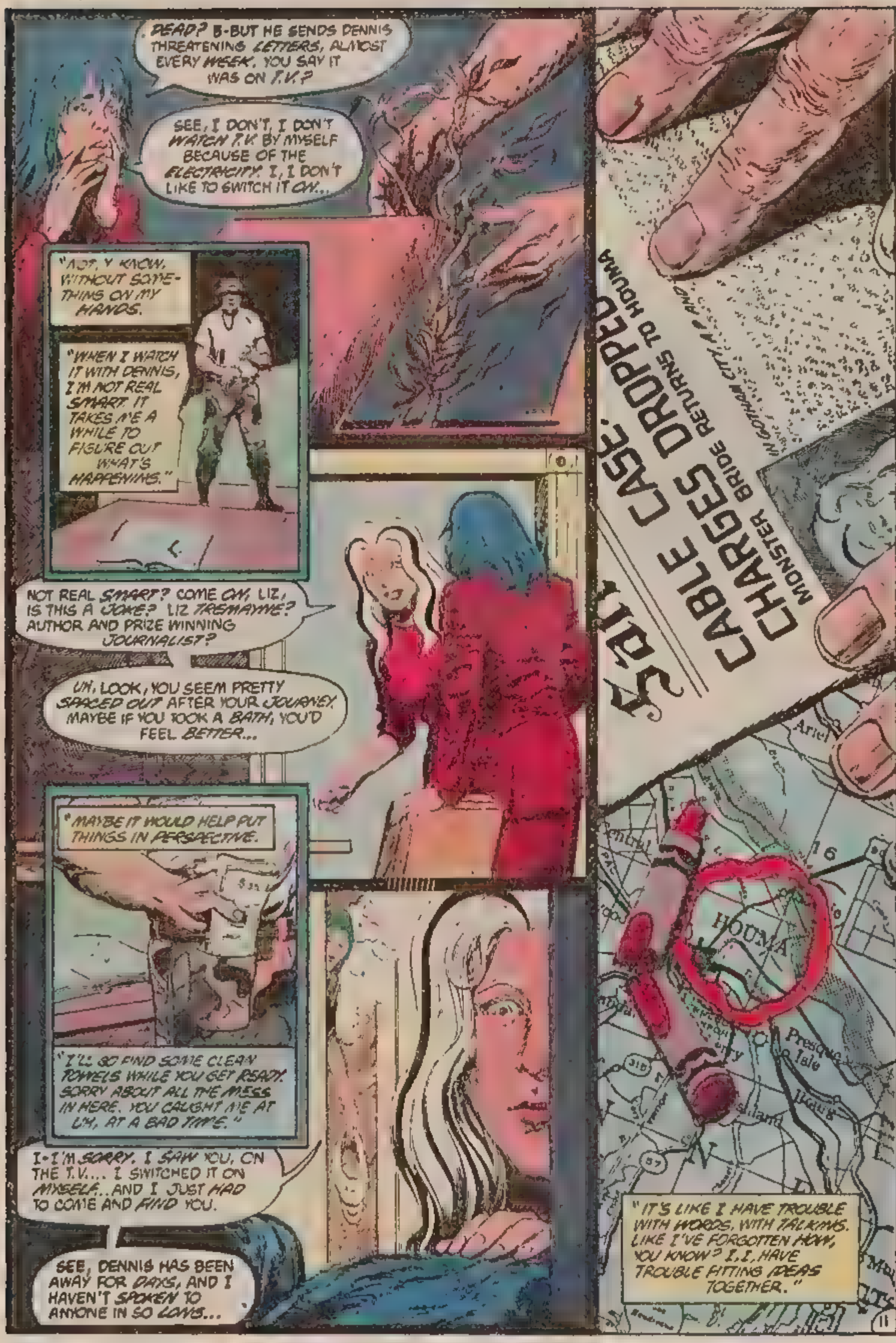
"SO EMPTY."

DENNIS? DENNIS BARCLAY? HE'S ALIVE TOO? THAT'S GREAT...

BUT I'M CONFUSED ABOUT THIS SUNDERLAND STUFF. GENERAL SUNDERLAND DIED, TWO YEARS AGO. IT WAS ON T.V. AND EVERYTHING.

I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU HEARD HE WAS STILL AFTER YOU...

..."BUT IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU GOT A BAD CONNECTION SOMEWHERE."


DEAD? B-BUT HE SENDS DENNIS THREATENING LETTERS, ALMOST EVERY WEEK. YOU SAY IT WAS ON T.V.?
SEE, I DON'T, I DON'T WATCH T.V. BY MYSELF BECAUSE OF THE ELECTRICITY. I, I DON'T LIKE TO SWITCH IT ON...
"NOT, Y KNOW, WITHOUT SOMETHING ON MY HANDS.
"WHEN I WATCH IT WITH DENNIS, I'M NOT REAL SMART. IT TAKES ME A WHILE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING."
NOT REAL SMART? COME ON, LIZ, IS THIS A JOKE? LIZ TREMAYNE? AUTHOR AND PRIZE WINNING JOURNALIST?
UH, LOOK, YOU SEEM PRETTY SPACED OUT AFTER YOUR JOURNEY. MAYBE IF YOU TOOK A BATH, YOU'D FEEL BETTER...
"MAYBE IT WOULD HELP PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.
"I'LL GO FIND SOME CLEAN TOWELS WHILE YOU GET READY. SORRY ABOUT ALL THE MESS IN HERE. YOU CAUGHT ME AT UH, AT A BAD TIME."
I-I'M SORRY. I SAW YOU, ON THE T.V.... I SWITCHED IT ON MYSELF...AND I JUST HAD TO COME AND FIND YOU.
SEE, DENNIS HAS BEEN AWAY FOR DAYS, AND I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO ANYONE IN SO LONG...
CABLE CASE: CHARGES DROPPED
MONSTER BRIDE RETURNS TO HOUMA
IN GOTHAM CITY, A.P. AND
HOUMA
"IT'S LIKE I HAVE TROUBLE WITH WORDS, WITH TALKING. LIKE I'VE FORGOTTEN HOW, YOU KNOW? I, I, HAVE TROUBLE FITTING IDEAS TOGETHER."
11

HERE, I FOUND SOME CLEAN TOWELS. YOU'RE LUCKY! I HAVEN'T DONE ANY LAUNDRY IN...

UHHH.. LIZ?

WHAT ARE THESE, UH, THESE THINGS OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM?

"OH, I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO DROP IT THERE. IT'S MY UNDERWEAR I-I DIDN'T PACK ANYTHING ELSE.

"I LEFT IN SORT OF A HURRY.."

BUT THESE ARE TOWELLING, STITCHED TOGETHER. THEY'RE NOT...

UH...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I-I'M TAKING A BATH.. DENNIS COULDN'T BUY ME NEW UNDERWEAR. IT WOULD HAVE ATTRACTED ATTENTION.

"YOU SEE. SUNDERLAND DIDN'T KNOW WHERE I WAS. DENNIS HAD FOOLED HIM.. BUT IF HE'D BEEN SEEN BUYING WOMEN'S THINGS, SUNDERLAND'S SAYES WOULD HAVE SUSPECTED

"I I THINK THAT'S IT DENNIS EXPLAINED IT TO ME. I OUGHT TO REMEMBER.."

LIZ, THIS... THIS ALL SOUNDS, I DUNNO, A LITTLE CRAZY.

I MEAN, WHY ARE YOU STANDING UP IN THE TUB? YOU COULD SIT DOWN..

OH, NO. OH, NO. I COULD HIT MY HEAD. I COULD DROWN. THOUSANDS DO. EVERY YEAR.

"IT'S A SURE WAY TO GET YOURSELF KILLED.

"DENNIS SAID SO."

"DENNIS SAID..."?

AWW, LIZ...

LIZ, YOU POOR KID...

DRRIIING

"I THINK SOMEBODY'S DONE SOMETHING TO YOU."

DONE SOMETHING? OH, NO, I'M FINE THEY TRIED TO GET ME, BUT DENNIS PROTECTED ME. I'M FINE.

WELCOME TO HOUMA LOUISIANA POP 1,682

FLYING A

HONDA

DRRIIING

OH GOD, LOOK, THAT'S THE DOOR. GET A ROBE ON WHILE I ANSWER IT AND THEN WE HAVE TO TALK.

"I MEAN, WE HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER IN OVER TWO YEARS...

LOUISIANA 80 MILES

"... AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE BOTH COVERED A LOT OF DISTANCE SINCE THEN."

DISTANCE? OH, NO. NOT ME. I'VE KEPT INDOORS.

FOR TWO YEARS?

OH, YES. YOU SEE, DENNIS, HE DIDN'T THINK IT WAS GOOD FOR ME TO TRAVEL. HE TOLD ME THE STATISTICS. THERE'S SO MUCH DEATH...

60 70 80

"DEATH ON THE ROADS."

UH, LOOK, LIZ, WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS IN A *MINUTE*, OKAY?

HELLO? DID YOU WANT SOMETHING?

YES.

DENNIS?

BJRRRRUDUDUT

AAAAAA!

WHERE IS SHE?

OH, GOD OH, GOD

LIZ?

LIZ?

YOU BITCH WHERE HAVE YOU HIDDEN HER?

AH.

D-DENNIS OH NO, I DIDN'T MEAN TO. I

YOU SEE, LIZ? YOU SEE HOW IT IS? YOU GO AGAINST WHAT WE'VE AGREED, YOU DO SOMETHING STUPID AND THERE'S TROUBLE!

OH, OH, DENNIS I'M SORRY, I...

"SORRY" ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH! WHAT IF YOU'D BUMPED INTO SUNDERLAND?

DAMN IT, LIZ, I'VE TOLD YOU AND TOLD YOU.

DENNIS PLEASE, DON'T

I MEAN WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR YOU TO GET THE IDEA?

BUT BUT SHE SAID SUNDERLAND... SHE SAID HE DIED.

AND YOU BELIEVED HER? YOU TRUSTED HER RATHER THAN ME? WHY, YOU KNOW THAT ISN'T REALLY ABBY...

ABBY'S DEAD! THAT'S ONE OF SUNDERLAND'S AGENTS!

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO K.

UH?

C'MON... OUT THE FRONT DOOR! WE CAN MAKE IT TO THE SWAMPS!

BUT BUT DENNIS

AAOWH!

LIZ! RUN! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

OH, GOD! THE SON! I LEFT HIM WITH THE GUN, HOW COULD I BE SO

MAYBE I CAN GET BACK THERE, BEFORE HE...

"ALL WE HAVE IN COMMON IS THE HORROR IN OUR LIVES, DENNIS."

THE COLD OCTOBER AIR SEEKS OUT HER SHOULDER BLADES, THE BACKS OF HER THIGHS, STILL WET FROM THE BATH, AND SHE STARTS TO SHAKE.

ABIGAIL IS WRENCHING AT HER HAND, SCREAMING FOR HER TO RUN.

BEHIND HER, SHE HEARS HIS BOOTS POUNDING TOWARDS THE TRUCK AND REMEMBERS HOW PARALYZED SHE'S FELT BEFORE THE UNREACHABLE ANGER IN HIS EYES...

RRRRRRRRR

HIS TERRIBLE, LOVELESS EYES.

LOVELESS?

HE'S KEPT HER SAFELY SHUT AWAY FOR YEARS. ISN'T THAT LOVE? SHE'S TERRIFIED OF LIFE WITHOUT HIM. ISN'T THAT LOVE?

WHAT OTHER KIND OF LOVE WILL PROTECT HER FROM THIS AWFUL WORLD?

WHAT OTHER KIND OF LOVE IS REALLY WORTH A DAMN?

THE LOVE SHE SHARES WITH DENNIS IS SPECIAL, WILL GROW INTO SOMETHING WONDERFUL. EVEN SHUT AWAY FROM THE SUNLIGHT..

SHE KNOWS THIS IS TRUE. HE TOLD HER SO HIMSELF.

BUT THOSE EYES.

THOSE EYES, THOSE EYES, THOSE EYES...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

BITCH.

DAMNED STUPID, USELESS...

WOULDN'T *LISTEN* TO ME. *OHH* NO. HAD TO FIND OUT FOR *YOURSELF*.

I'M NOT LETTING YOU GO, WOMAN! YOU *HEAR* ME?

SWAMPS WON'T HIDE YOU. I WAS IN *'NAM*. ALL THESE *TREES*... GOD, I *REMEMBER*...

WE HAD A *PERFECT* SET-UP. I COULD HAVE KEPT YOU THERE *FOREVER*, BOTH OF US, IN *LOVE*. I COULD HAVE...

HAAAH!

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

I *SEE* YOU! IT'S NO GOOD *RUNNING*, NOT YOU *OR* YOUR FRIEND!

YOU COME *BACK* HERE, *BOTH* OF YOU!

I TELL YOU *WHAT*... YOU COME BACK HERE *NOW*, AND MAYBE I WON'T *PUNISH* YOU TOO MUCH.

MAYBE JUST CUT BACK YOUR *SOAP RATION* A LITTLE.

THAT WOULDN'T BE TOO *BAD*, HUH?

LIZ?

OKAY.

EEEEEECH!

SKLISH

OKAY, IF THAT'S HOW YOU *WANT* IT, YOU *GOT* IT. I'M *COMING*, LIZ.

THE HONEYMOON'S *OVER*.

ON SUMMER MORNINGS WE'D WAKE BENEATH A BIG, HOT SKY, AND I'D CUP MY HANDS TO MY FACE, YOUR SCENT STILL UPON THEM, TASTING THE JUICE OF CRUSHED FLOWERS ON MY FINGERTIPS.

NEVER AGAIN.

NEVER...

WITH YOU, I FELT LIKE A GODDESS. YOU GAVE ME SO MUCH RESPECT. MADE ME FEEL SO BEAUTIFUL, SO SPECIAL..

NOW, JUST LIKE THAT, YOU'RE GONE, AND I'M ORDINARY AFTER ALL.

NOTHING WITHOUT YOU, MY LOVE, NOTHING.

LIZ IS USELESS. SHE WON'T RUN, SOMEONE'S BROKEN EVERY BONE IN HER SOUL, AND SHE WAS SO BRIGHT, SO STRONG. I GUESS IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO DISMANTLE A HUMAN BEING.

WE COME APART SO EASILY.

BRACKEN CRUNCHING BEHIND US. HE'S FOLLOWING ON FOOT. YOU'D STOP HIM, BUT YOU'RE NOT HERE AND I CAN'T.

WHY CAN'T I? DIDN'T ANY OF YOUR MAGIC RUB OFF? DIDN'T ANYTHING LASTING GROW FROM OUR LOVE?

YOU'D HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO DO. YOU'D HAVE STAYED CALM AND LISTENED AND LET THE SWAMP TELL YOU EVERYTHING...

THE ACRID SCENT OF GATORS, UPWIND... A PATCH OF FUNGUS ON A TREE BOLL THAT YOU RECOGNIZE...

THE MINIATURE THUNDERHEADS OF MIDGES, DRAWN TO NEARBY WATER.. THE WIND COUNTING FLOWERS THAT RUSTLE LIKE DOLLAR BILLS BETWEEN ITS FINGERS...

ABBY? ABBY, HE'S C-COMING. MAYBE, MAYBE IF I APOLOGIZED..

SHHH.

THAT WAY.

WH-WHERE ARE WE GOING? HE'S RIGHT *BEHIND* US! HE'LL *CATCH* US. HE'LL...

SHUT UP AND JUST KEEP *RUNNING.*

NO.. NOT ACROSS THE *FLOWERS*

WE GO 'ROUND THE *EDGE*, THROUGH THE *UNDERGROWTH*

BUT. BUT IF THESE *THORNS* SCRATCH US, WE COULD GET *TETANUS*. *THOUSANDS* DO, EVERY YEAR DENNIS SAID SO HE...

LIZ, *DENNIS* HAS A *MACHINE GUN*. LET'S RISK THE *TETANUS*, OKAY?

JUST KEEP *MOVING*

OKAY. OKAY, WE'RE *OUT*. NO MORE *RUNNING*

BUT...BUT WE COULD HAVE GONE ACROSS THE *FLOWERS*. WHAT IF I GOT *SCRATCHED* IN THERE? I MIGHT HAVE TETANUS RIGHT *NOW*. I MIGHT...

.. DIE...

HAAHH!

THIS IS IT! THIS IS IT, YOU UNGRATEFUL SLUT!

YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED *HOME*, LIZ! YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED HOME LIKE I *TOLD* YOU! YOU...

:GHHJARP:

SPLOSH!

:PFFUHH:

OH BOY. OH *BOY*, ARE YOU IN *FOR* IT. MADE ME DRENCH MY *GUN*.

YOU THINK THAT'LL *STOP* ME?

HUH? YOU THINK THAT'S EVEN GONNA SLOW ME *DOWN*?

I WADED THROUGH *PUDDLES* WIDER THAN THIS IN *'NAM*... SAME PLACE I LEARNED WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR *GUN* FAILS.

OH BOY. OH BOY, WHEN I GET TO *YOU*...

SPLASH SPLASH

SEE, YOU CAN'T JUST RUN *OUT* LIKE THAT, LIZ. NOT WITHOUT *REPERCUSSIONS*.

IT CAUSES THE SORT OF TROUBLE THAT *SPREADS*, AND KEEPS ON GETTING *BIGGER*...

PUP

...UNTIL *APOLOGIZING* DOESN'T *WORK* AND IT'S NO GOOD BEGGING FOR *MERCY*.

... AND, IN THE END, SOMEONE ALWAYS GETS *HURT*.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE TO... OWNS

AS FOR YOU, YOU FREAKY, WHITE-HAIRED *WITCH*. YOU STUCK YOUR SNOTTY NOSE INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS ONCE TOO *OFTEN*. I'M GONNA...

YOU SHOULD LOOK BEHIND YOU, DENNIS.

HAAH! YOU THINK I'M *STUPID*? YOU THINK THIS IS *BONANZA* OR SOMETHING?

YOU SPOILED A BEAUTIFUL *ROMANCE*, BITCH, AND I'M GONNA CLUB YOUR *BRAINS* RIGHT OUT OF YOUR F...

CHROPP

AAAA

EEEEEEEEEEEELIZEEEEEEEEE
STOP IT STOPITSTOPITEEEEEE

EEEELIZLIZLIZLIZ
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

HELLO? MR. WILLIAMS? CHESTER WILLIAMS? THIS IS ABBY CABLE...

UH, YEAH. RIGHT. "FAR OUT."

HELLO? COMMISSIONER GORDON? YES. ABIGAIL CABLE. GIVE ME THE DATE AND I'D BE GLAD TO ATTEND YOUR MEMORIAL SERVICE.

YES. TELL HIM I'M FEELING MUCH BETTER AND THANK HIM FOR ASKING. I TOOK H'S ADVICE AND FACED MY LOSS

WHO KNOWS..

LISTEN, I'VE BEEN THINKING. ABOUT THAT ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP YOU SUGGESTED..

YES YES. I'M FEELING BETTER NOW YES. MUCH STRONGER.

"MAYBE SOMETHING GOOD WILL COME OUT OF IT ALL, LIKE HE SAID."

"MAYBE SOMETHING WILL GROW FROM IT."

NEXT: EARTH TO EARTH

SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
55
75¢
DEC 86
SWAMP THING
The Times-Picayune
The States-Item
SWAMP MONSTER DESTROYED
GOTHAM CITY IN RUINS
WHO watches the WATCHMEN?

IF YOU WEAR BLACK, THEN KINDLY, IRRITATING STRANGERS WILL TOUCH YOUR ARM CONSOLINGLY AND IN A FORM YOU THAT THE WORLD KEEPS ON TURNING.

THEY'RE RIGHT. IT DOES.

HOWEVER MUCH YOU BEG IT TO STOP.

IT TURNS AND LETS GRENADINE SPILL OVER THE HORIZON, SENDS HARD BARS OF GOLD THROUGH MY WINDOW AND I WAKE UP AND FEEL HAPPY FOR THREE SECONDS AND THEN I REMEMBER.

IT TURNS AND TIPS PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR BEDS AND INTO THEIR CARS, THEIR OFFICES. AN AVALANCHE OF TINY MEN AND WOMEN TUMBLING THROUGH LIFE...

ALL TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT'S WAITING AT THE BOTTOM.

SOMETIMES IT TURNS AND SENDS US REELING INTO EACH OTHER'S ARMS. WE CLING TIGHT, EXCITED AND LAUGHING STRANGERS THROWN TOGETHER ON A MOVING FUNHOUSE FLOOR.

INTOXICATED BY THE MOTION WE FORGET ALL THE RISKS.

AND THEN THE WORLD TURNS..

AND SOMEBODY FALLS OFF..

AND OH GOD IT'S SUCH A LONG WAY DOWN.

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NUMB WITH SHOCK WE CAN ONLY STAND AND WATCH AS THEY FALL AWAY FROM US GRADUALLY GETTING SMALLER

RECEEDING IN OUR MEMORIES UNTIL THEY ARE NO LONGER VISIBLE.

WE GATHER IN CEMETERIES TENSE AND SILENT AS IF LISTENING FOR THE IMPACT THE SPLASH OF A PEBBLE DROPPED INTO A DARK WELL, TRYING TO MEASURE ITS DEPTH.

TRYING TO MEASURE NOW FOR WE HAVE TO FALL.

NO IMPACT COMES. NO SPLASH THE MOMENT PASSES THE WORLD TURNS AND WE TURN AWAY GETTING ON WITH OUR LIVES..

WRAPPING OURSELVES IN COMFORTING BANALITIES TO KEEP US WARM AGAINST THE COLD

"TIME IS A GREAT HEALER."

"AT LEAST IT WAS QUICK"

"THE WORLD KEEPS ON TURNING"

ON ALEC

ALEC'S DEAD.

SWAMP THING
ORIGINALLY SCRIPTED BY LEN WEIN & BERNI WRIGHTSON
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VEITCH, ALCALA & TOTLEBEN artists
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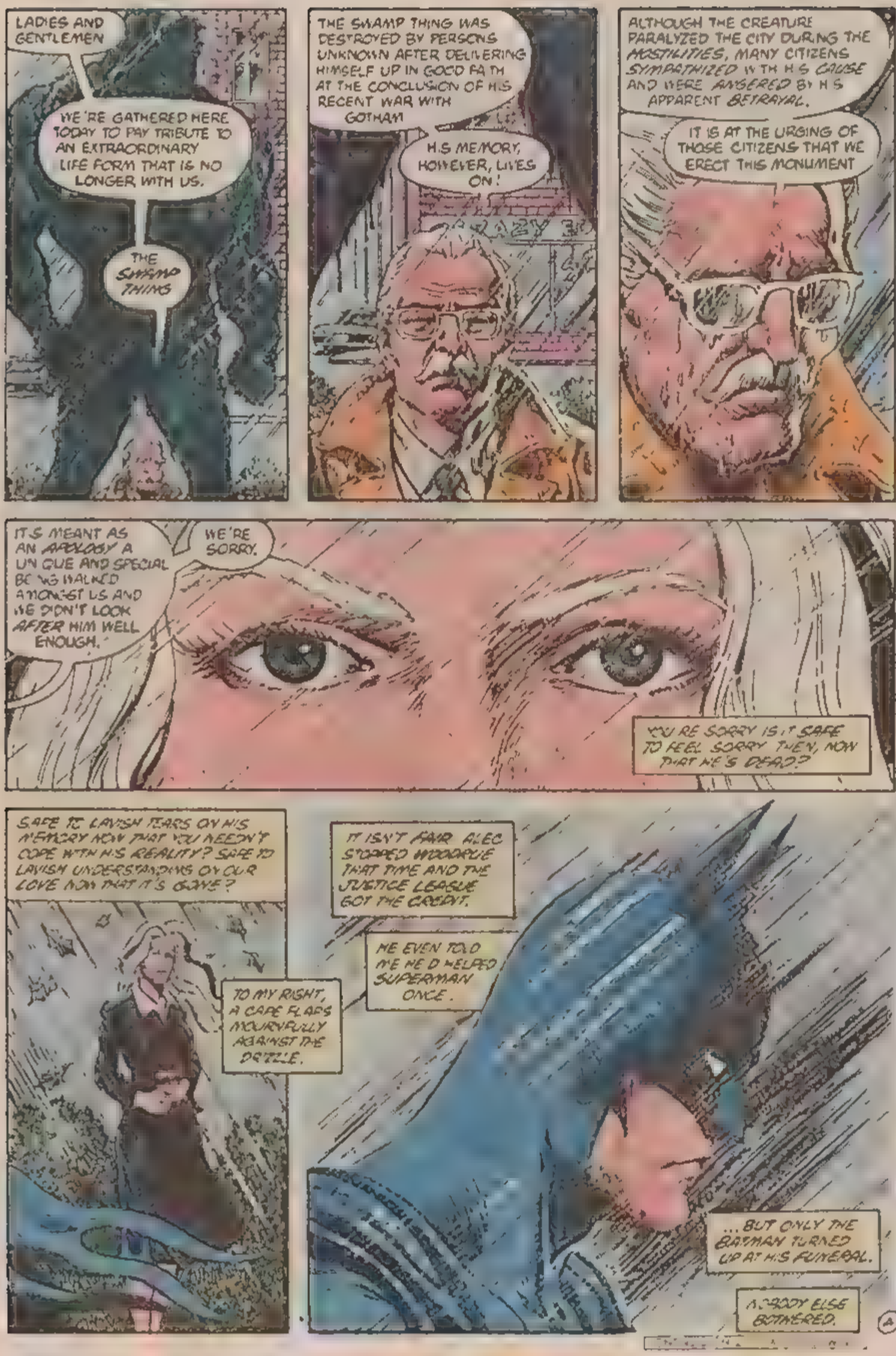

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
WE'RE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE FORM THAT IS NO LONGER WITH US.
THE SWAMP THING
THE SWAMP THING WAS DESTROYED BY PERSONS UNKNOWN AFTER DELIVERING HIMSELF UP IN GOOD FAITH AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS RECENT WAR WITH GOTHAM
HIS MEMORY, HOWEVER, LIVES ON!
ALTHOUGH THE CREATURE PARALYZED THE CITY DURING THE HOSTILITIES, MANY CITIZENS SYMPATHIZED WITH HIS CAUSE AND WERE ANGERED BY HIS APPARENT BETRAYAL.
IT IS AT THE URGING OF THOSE CITIZENS THAT WE ERECT THIS MONUMENT
IT'S MEANT AS AN APOLOGY A UNIQUE AND SPECIAL BEING WALKED AMONGST US AND WE DIDN'T LOOK AFTER HIM WELL ENOUGH.
WE'RE SORRY.
YOU'RE SORRY IS IT SAFE TO FEEL SORRY THEN, NOW THAT HE'S DEAD?
SAFE TO LAVISH TEARS ON HIS MEMORY NOW THAT YOU NEEDN'T COPE WITH HIS REALITY? SAFE TO LAVISH UNDERSTANDING ON OUR LOVE NOW THAT IT'S GONE?
TO MY RIGHT, A CAPE FLAPS MOURNFULLY AGAINST THE DRIZZLE.
IT ISN'T FAIR. ALEC STOPPED WOODRUE THAT TIME AND THE JUSTICE LEAGUE GOT THE CREDIT.
HE EVEN TOLD ME HE'D HELPED SUPERMAN ONCE.
...BUT ONLY THE BATMAN TURNED UP AT HIS FUNERAL.
NOBODY ELSE BOTHERED.
4

THEY FEEL GUILTY ENOUGH TO PUT UP A STATUE, OFFERING IT TO ME AS IF IT WERE COMPENSATION..

... BUT OH, IT'S JUST COLD STONE AND YOUR KISS WAS SWEET AND SOFT AND WARM IN THE SUNLIGHT.

LIZ TREMAYNE STANDS BEHIND ME. I HAD TO BRING HER. SHE'S HELPLESS ON HER OWN AND I'M ALL SHE'S GOT BOTH WIDOWS, BUT AT LEAST I'M STILL IN ONE PIECE...

TYNE'S A GREAT HEALER.

THE WORLD KEEPS TURNING.

THERE'S CHESTER WILLIAMS. HE HITCHED UP HERE WEARING A SUIT HE CAN'T BE COMFORTABLE IN.

.. AND THE ART DETECTIVE, BLOCK. HE'S SHAVED, AND HE EVEN SEEMS TO HAVE STOPPED EATING. I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY ELSE.

THE POLICE COMMISSIONER IS TALKING, RAIN TRICKLING DOWN HIS GLASSES. I CRY. I CONCENTRATE ON WHAT HE'S SAYING.

I'M TRYING TO REMEMBER THE COLOR OF YOUR EYES AND OH GOD I CAN'T.

ARE YOU STARTING TO FADE AWAY ALREADY? WILL I WAKE ONE MORNING UNABLE TO REMEMBER YOUR SCENT, YOUR POSTURE, YOUR VOICE?

OH LOVE, I WANT TO KEEP YOU SHARP IN MY MEMORY EVEN THOUGH IT HURTS.

SHARP ENOUGH TO CUT ME

ALEC?

ALEC? ARE YOU ANYWHERE AROUND? I SAW SOME *FOOTPRINTS* BUT I KINDA *LOST* 'EM AGAIN.

ALEC? *HELLO?*

I'M SORRY I'M *LATE* AND EVERYTHING ONE OF THE KIDS UP AT THE HOME GOT REAL *VIOLENT* AND I HAD TO HELP *DEANNA* TO...

OH...

THERE YOU ARE.

ENJOYING THE *MOONLIGHT* ON THE WATER, HUH? I COULD USE SOME OF THAT... MOVE OVER AND LET ME *JOIN* YOU

BOY THAT KID *CHRISTINE* UP AT THE HOME TODAY YOU WOULDN'T *BELIEVE* THE TROUBLE WE HAD...

OOOHHH. IT FEELS SO *GOOD* TO SIT DOWN. SHE'S HAD US RUNNING AROUND SINCE I STARTED WORK THIS *MORNING.*

SEE WE HAVE THESE HOT AIR DRYERS, Y'KNOW, LIKE IN THE *BATHROOMS?* ANYWAY, WHAT CHRISTINE DID WAS STUFF THE *AIR BLOWER* FULL OF..

OH.

ALEC?

I'M MAKING TOO MUCH *NOISE,* RIGHT?

I'M SORRY. IT'S JUST THAT OUTSIDE THE SWAMP, THINGS ARE NOISIER AND FASTER

I RUN AROUND BABBLING ALL DAY, AND THEN WHEN I GET BACK HERE IT TAKES ME A WHILE TO ADJUST.

STILL LIKE ME?

HMMM?

OH, YOU'RE SULKING, RIGHT? I KNOW WHAT IT IS. I'VE BEEN IN FROM WORK FIVE MINUTES TALKING ABOUT MY STUPID JOB, I DIDN'T EVEN GIVE YOU A KISS YET

HERE...LET ME FIX THAT...

MMMM

OH, YOU SMELL SO GOOD, I WANT TO SQUEEZE YOU TO DEATH. I...

...WANT...

UUUGHHH...

NNHUHNHH

NNNUNNH...

ABBY...?

EEEEEEAAAAAA!

EEEEEEEEEAAAHH

ABBY, WHAT...

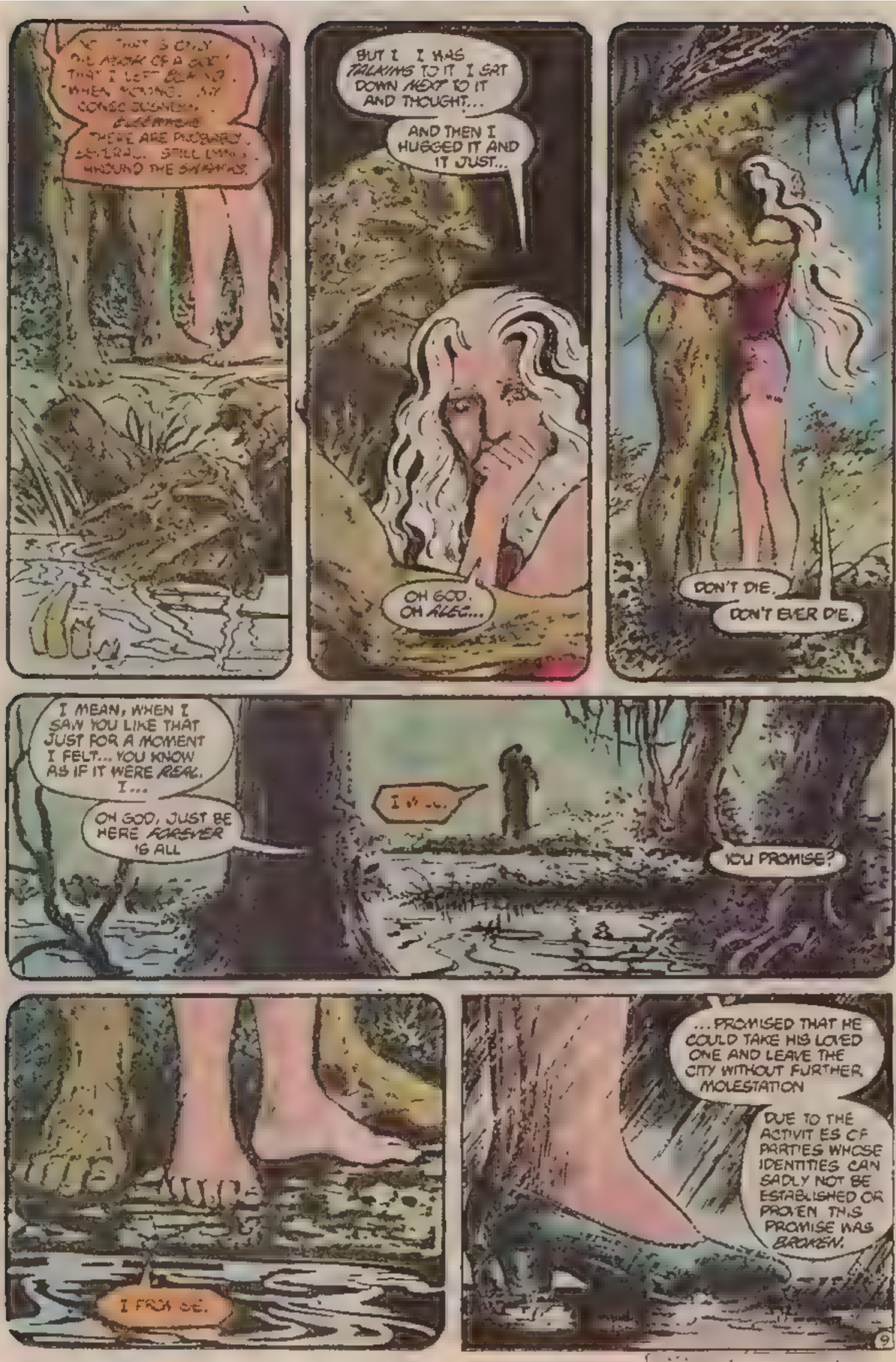
ABBY? IT'S ME...

I DID NOT MEAN . . TO STARTLE YOU...

ALEC?

ALEC, OH GOD...

OH GOD, I THOUGHT I'D *KILLED* YOU


BUT I I WAS TALKING TO IT I SAT DOWN NEXT TO IT AND THOUGHT...
AND THEN I HUGGED IT AND IT JUST...
OH GOD. OH ALEC...
DON'T DIE.
DON'T EVER DIE.
I MEAN, WHEN I SAW YOU LIKE THAT JUST FOR A MOMENT I FELT... YOU KNOW AS IF IT WERE REAL. I...
OH GOD, JUST BE HERE FOREVER IS ALL
YOU PROMISE?
...PROMISED THAT HE COULD TAKE HIS LOVED ONE AND LEAVE THE CITY WITHOUT FURTHER MOLESTATION
DUE TO THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTIES WHOSE IDENTITIES CAN SADLY NOT BE ESTABLISHED OR PROVEN THIS PROMISE WAS BROKEN.
9

IF IT SEEMS *HYPOCRITICAL* TO *EULOGIZE* A BEING THAT WE RECENTLY *FOUGHT* AGAINST, THEN ON BEHALF OF GOTHAM I *APOLOGIZE* THAT WASN'T OUR *INTENT*

OUR INTENT WAS TO SHOW OUR DEEP REGRET FOR THAT *BROKEN PROMISE*

NOW, WHILE I THINK I CAN SPEAK FOR THE CITY, I CANNOT SPEAK FOR THE *OTHER* GROUP AFFECTED BY THIS LOSS.

I REFER, OF COURSE, TO EARTH'S *SUPER-HUMAN* COMMUNITY.

ALTHOUGH HE WAS SELDOM SEEN AND HIS EXPLOITS LARGELY UNREPORTED, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HE BELONGED TO THAT EXCLUSIVE FRATERNITY

GOES *ON* A BIT, DON'T HE?

.. WORKING QUIETLY AND INVISIBLY FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF THE WORLD.

THERE IS SOMETHING IN *DEATH* AIN'T TO THAT WHICH EXISTS IN *LOVE*: BOTH SPUR MEN TO *ELOQUENCE*

HE *IS* DEAD THEN?

I'VE SEARCHED THE PLANET FOR SOME SIGN OF HIM. THERE IS NO TRACE.

MMM! NONE OF *MY* PEOPLE HAVE REPORTED ANYTHING *EITHER* LOOKS *TERMINAL*, DUNNIT?

THEREFORE, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEMISE,

...IT'S FITTING THAT ONE OF THAT FRATERNITY'S MOST RESPECTED MEMBERS SHOULD SAY A FEW WORDS.

DID YOU COME TO SPEAK TO HIS *WIDOW*?

NAH. IT'D ONLY *UPSET* HER. JUST CALLED TO PAY MY *RESPECTS*

YOU?

THE SAME. I HAVE SEEN ENOUGH, AND WOULD BE ON MY WAY.

GOODBYE, JOHN CONSTANTINE. GO SAFELY.

YEAH. YOU *TOO*, MATE. AND *LISTEN*, DON'T BE A *STRANGER*, OKAY?

I HAND YOU OVER TO SOMEONE WHO NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION

THANK YOU, COMMISSIONER

LAD'ES. GENTLEMEN. MS CABLE.

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO ENCOUNTER THE SWAMP THING ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE LAST MET AS *ANTAGONISTS* I HELD HIM IN THE GREATEST *REGARD*.

A REGARD ONLY *EQUALED* BY MY *CONTEMPT* FOR HIS ANONYMOUS *MURDERERS*. IT WAS A COWARDLY EXECUTION, A CRUEL DEATH HE DESERVED *BETTER*

LIKE THE EARTH HE SPRANG FROM, HE DESERVED OUR *RESPECT* PERHAPS EVEN OUR *LOVE*.

BUT HE'S *GONE*.

..AND AS EVER, IT'S FUTILE TO SPECULATE ON WHAT *MIGHT* HAVE BEEN.

ABBY?

ALEC?

YOU'RE NOT DEAD?

I-I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT

OH ALEC, ALEC, I'M SO HAPPY

SO AM I

THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT FROM NOW ON

WE WILL NOT BE PERSECUTED ANYMORE

REALLY? YOU REALLY MEAN THAT? THAT PEOPLE COULD JUST ACCEPT US FOR WHAT WE ARE

HOLLAND DRIVE

ELYSIUM

HOUMA DAILY COURIER

JAIL

ABBY?

OH THANK GOODNESS! FOUND YOU

DEANNA?

ABBY I WANTED TO APOLOGIZE FOR BEING SO HOSTILE TO YOU.

PLUS, I WANT YOU TO TAKE YOUR JOB BACK WITH A RAISE IN SALARY

Y-YOU DO? BUT I THOUGHT.

NEVER MIND WHAT YOU THOUGHT. I AM JUST SO HAPPY FOR THE TWO OF YOU

MRS CABLE? I'M FROM THE DAILY COURIER PLEASE ACCEPT THESE ROSES AS AN APOLOGY FOR THOSE SPITEFUL THINGS WE PRINTED ABOUT YOU

THAT GOES FOR ALL OF US. WE WERE STUPID AND PREJUDICED AND COULDN'T ACCEPT THE LOVE YOU SHARE

THAT'S CHANGED NOW. WE'D BE HONORED IF YOU'D COME AND BE MARRIED AT THE PARRISH COURT HOUSE...

MARRIED?

OH YES. YES, MORE THAN ANYTHING, BUT DON'T WE NEED TIME TO PREPARE? I MEAN, WE DON'T HAVE A BEST MAN OR ANYTHING..

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT.

MATT? BUT YOU'RE .

SHHH DON'T SAY IT. I CAME OUT OF MY COMA, AND I'VE FILED FOR AUTOMATIC DIVORCE

YOU'RE FREE TO MARRY ALEC WHENEVER YOU LIKE, WITH MY BLESSINGS

WE HAD FUN, AB. BUT YOU AND ALEC WERE MEANT FOR EACH OTHER. I WISH YOU EVERY HAPPINESS IN THE WORLD

THE PEOPLE ARE WAITING AT THE COURTHOUSE!

WE MUST HURRY

OH YES! I DON'T WANT TO BE LATE ALEC, JUST IMAGINE... WE'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE TOGETHER OPENLY AT LAST

WE'LL BUY A HOUSE WITH A BIG GARDEN FOR YOU TO LIVE IN AND THE NEIGHBORS WILL STOP BY TO CHAT IN THE EVENINGS. AND. UHHH

ALEC DOESN'T THIS PLACE LOOK FAMILIAR?

OH MATT. MATT THANK YOU YOU'LL ALWAYS BE THE FRIEND I LOVE THE BEST

ALEC?

ALEC? YOU RE NOT COMING?

WHAT'S WRONG?

WHY SHOULD ANYTHING... BE WRONG...?

I... I DUNNO I JUST KEEP FEELING *UNEASY*. I'VE SEEN THIS PLACE *BEFORE*, AND

...AND HOW DID YOU ESCAPE THAT *FIRE* IF YOU COULDN'T GET OUT OF YOUR *BODY* AND INTO THE *GREEN*?

I DIDN'T.

[illegible]

[illegible]

NO!

ALEC *NO!* SAY IT DOESN'T END LIKE THIS! THE OTHER ENDING WAS BETTER

OH GOD, OH GOD IT WAS SO MUCH BETTER PLEASE DON'T GO ALEC, I...

...LOVE..

...YOU..

WHUFFF

ALEC!

MRS. CABLE?

LET ME GO! I WANT TO BE WITH HIM!

MRS. CABLE?

...THIS MONUMENT TO THE MEMORY OF A BEING THAT WAS ONLY RELUCTANTLY PUSHED INTO THE ROLE OF MANKIND'S ENEMY.

MRS CABLE?

HUNH?

...A BEING THAT WAS ALWAYS A FRIEND TO THIS PLANET...

WHO...?

YOU DON'T KNOW ME MY NAME'S BRAND. BOSTON BRAND

I KNEW THE BIG GUY, AND WHEN I HEARD HE WAS DEAD, I CHECKED OUT ALL THE PLACES HE MIGHT HAVE ENDED UP.

...AND TO ALL THE CREATURES UPON IT

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, HE WASN'T ANYWHERE THROUGHOUT THE AFTERWORLD. WHAT I'M SAYING IS, DON'T GIVE UP HERE. YOU'RE A SWEET KID, SO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

'BYE NOW.

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

HE WILL BE MISSED HE WILL BE MOURNED...

MR BRAND? PLEASE! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

HUHN? BRAND?

WHO'S BRAND? MY NAME'S DELAMARE.

AND AS MY PERSONAL PLEDGE, IF HIS KILLERS MAKE THE SLIGHTEST MISTAKE FROM NOW UNTIL THEIR DEATHS, HE WILL BE AVENGED.

LEAVE THE LADY ALONE, CREEPO — YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.

WHAT? BUT I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.

FINALLY I'D LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT THE COMMISSIONER OMITTED THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTY OF ALL FROM HIS LIST OF THE BEREAVED

I REFER TO MS. ABIGAIL CABLE; THE WOMAN I FEEL IS ENTITLED TO CALL HERSELF THE SWAMP THING'S WIDOW.

AFTER THE CREATURE HIMSELF, IT IS SHE THAT WE HAVE WRONGED MOST DEEPLY.

PUBLIC DISORDER, MOLESTATION

OH GOD, LISTEN, PLEASE, I MUST HAVE HAD A BLACKOUT. I TAKE THESE ALLERGY TABLETS.

MS. CABLE.. YOU KNEW HIM BETTER THAN ANYONE. YOU WERE LOVERS.. I THINK ALL OF US WERE A LITTLE AWED BY A LOVE THAT COULD STOP A CITY.

YOUR STRUGGLES HAVEN'T GAINED YOU MUCH... BUT WHAT THEY HAVE GAINED YOU IS THE RIGHT TO A VOICE.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO SPEAK, IF ONLY TO CONDEMN US FOR OUR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING, THEN I THINK IT'S THE DUTY OF EVERY PERSON HERE TO LISTEN.

MS CABLE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY STATEMENT THAT YOU WISH TO MAKE?

I'M SORRY THERE'S NOTHING ELSE I WANT TO SAY.

NOT OUT LOUD.

ALEC?

ALEC, WHERE DID YOU GO?

YOU WERE HERE JUST A WHILE AGO NOW THERE'S ONLY THIS COLD ROCK TO SHELTER AGAINST; THIS COLDER ROCK INSIDE MY CHEST.

WE RAN ACROSS THE SQUARE TOWARDS EACH OTHER, TOWARDS OUR HAPPY ENDING WE LOOKED INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES..

... AND SOMEHOW WE WERE BOTH TURNED TO STONE.

THAT ISN'T HOW LEGENDS ARE SUPPOSED TO WORK OUT SOMEBODY SCREWED UP.

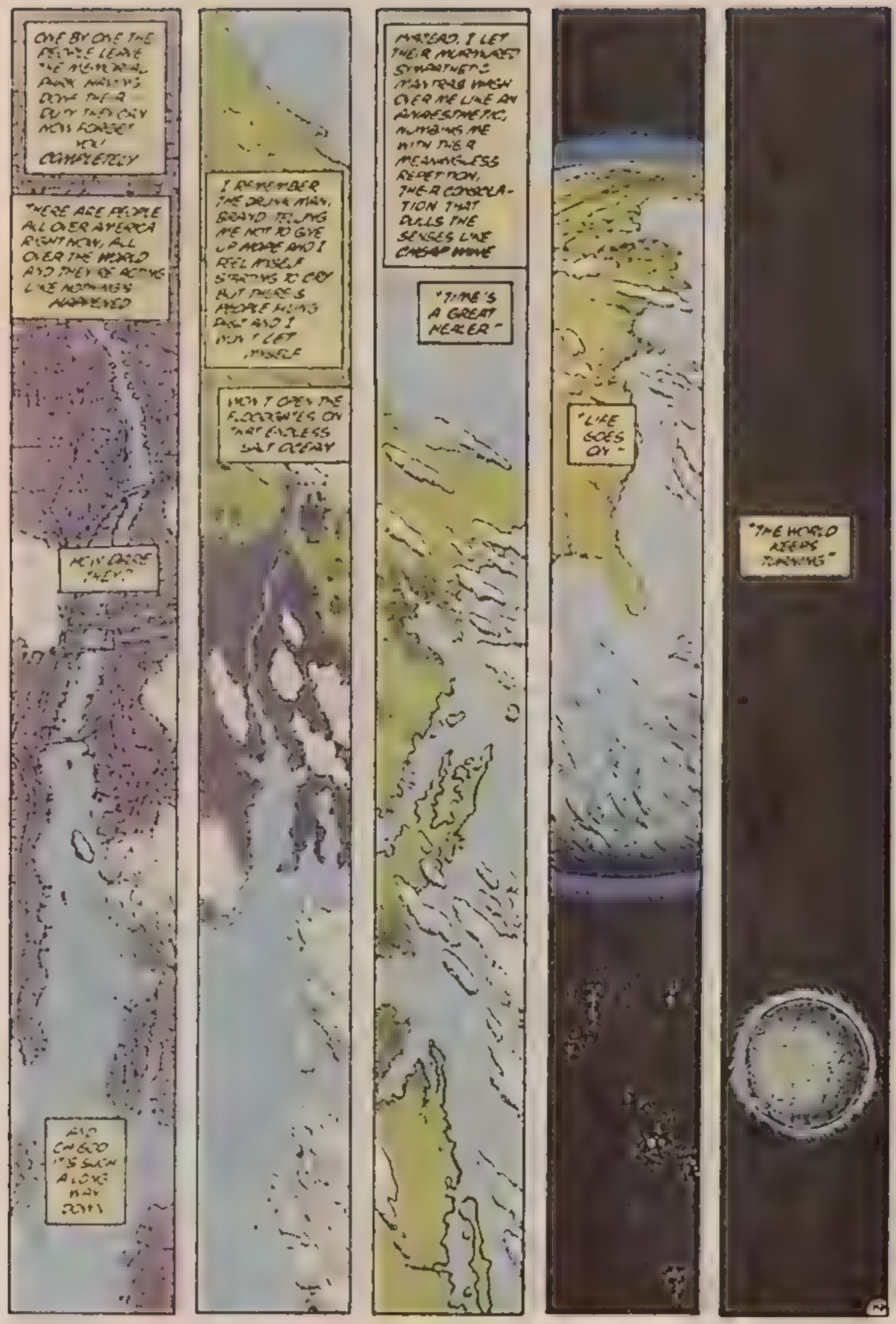
I KEEP THINKING GOD WILL LOOK DOWN AND NOTICE, REALIZE SOMETHING'S WRONG, SOMETHING'S HAPPENED THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED.

ANY TIME NOW HE'S GOING TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE MISTAKE AND FIX IT.

ANY TIME NOW.

WELL?

I'M WAITING.


ONE BY ONE THE PEOPLE LEAVE THE MEMORIAL PARK HAVING DONE THEIR DUTY THEY CAN NOW FORGET YOU COMPLETELY
THERE ARE PEOPLE ALL OVER AMERICA RIGHT NOW, ALL OVER THE WORLD AND THEY'RE ACTING LIKE NOTHING'S HAPPENED
HOW DARE THEY?
AND OH GOD IT'S SUCH A LONG WAY DOWN
I REMEMBER THE DRUNK MAN, BRAND TELLING ME NOT TO GIVE UP HOPE AND I FEEL MYSELF STARTING TO CRY BUT THERE'S PEOPLE FILING PAST AND I WON'T LET MYSELF
WON'T OPEN THE FLOODGATES ON THAT ENDLESS SALT OCEAN
INSTEAD, I LET THEIR MURMURED SYMPATHETIC MANTRAS WASH OVER ME LIKE AN ANAESTHETIC, NUMBING ME WITH THEIR MEANINGLESS REPETITION, THEIR CONSOLATION THAT DULLS THE SENSES LIKE CHEAP WINE
"TIME'S A GREAT HEALER"
"LIFE GOES ON"
"THE WORLD KEEPS TURNING"

I KNOW NOTHING'S GAINED BY HOPING EXCEPT PAIN

I'VE COMBED THROUGH THE PAST, LOOKING FOR SOME GLINT OF HOPE. PANNING FOR GOLD BUT THE MOTHER LODE HAS LONG SINCE RUN DRY.

YOU'RE DEAD. YOU'RE REALLY DEAD.

SOMEBODY SHOT YOU WITH SOME-THING AND THEN YOU COULDN'T GET INTO THE GREEN ANYMORE. COULDN'T ESCAPE TO ANOTHER BODY...

...AND THEN THEY BURNED YOU.

THAT TERRIBLE FIRE. SO BRIGHT, SO INSATIABLY HUNGRY.

THE PLANET TURNED AWAY FROM YOU AT THE END, SHUTTING YOU OUT FROM ITS WARM GREEN BOSOM AND WHERE ELSE COULD YOU GO?

THE EARTH REJECTED HER ELEMENTAL, DELIVERING HIM INTO THE FIRE...

...AND THE WIND AND RAIN PLAYED DICE FOR H'S ASHES.

WE HAD A YEAR TOGETHER THAT ISN'T MUCH IN THE REACHES OF ETERNITY, BUT IT WAS A GOOD YEAR, AND THANK YOU, GOD, FOR GIVING IT TO ME.

WE WORKED SO HARD TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN US BUT IT WAS ALL FOR NOTHING

...AND THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US NOW IS UNBRIDGABLE.

THAT DRUNK SAID SOMETHING ABOUT AN 'AFTERWORLD' THAT I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, BUT MAYBE A WINO'S DELUSION IS THE BEST THING I HAVE TO CLING TO RIGHT NOW. .
...AND PERHAPS, WHEN WE DIE, THERE'S ANOTHER WORLD SOMEWHERE.
PERHAPS THERE'S A HEAVEN SO BIG IT HAS ROOM FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU. I HOPE SO. I HOPE YOU'RE THERE NOW.
GOODBYE, MY LOVE.
GOODBYE.
SKLITCH!
PWACK
SCLUC
KWILP
PLETCH
21

NEXT
My Blue Heaven
22

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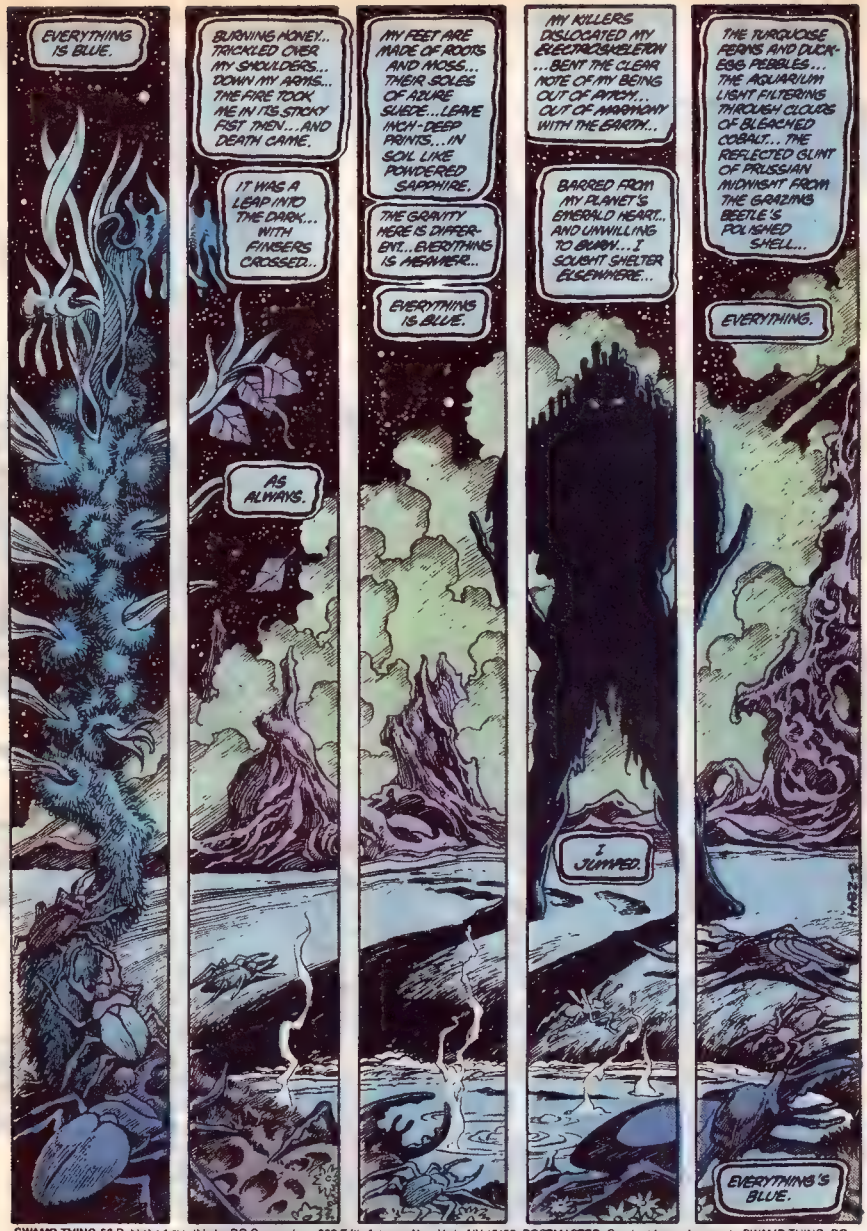
SWAMP THING

BY
ALAN MOORE,
RICK VEITCH &
ALFREDO ALCALA

WINNER OF TWO JACK KIRBY AWARDS!

ACTION #584 is coming!


EVERYTHING IS BLUE.
BURNING HONEY.. TRICKLED OVER MY SHOULDERS... DOWN MY ARMS... THE FIRE TOOK ME IN ITS STICKY FIST THEN... AND DEATH CAME.
IT WAS A LEAP INTO THE DARK... WITH FINGERS CROSSED..
AS ALWAYS.
MY FEET ARE MADE OF ROOTS AND MOSS... THEIR SOLES OF AZURE SUEDE... LEAVE INCH-DEEP PRINTS... IN SOIL LIKE POWDERED SAPPHIRE.
THE GRAVITY HERE IS DIFFERENT... EVERYTHING IS MEANWHER...
EVERYTHING IS BLUE.
MY KILLERS DISLOCATED MY ELECTROSKELETON ...BENT THE CLEAR NOTE OF MY BEING OUT OF KEY... OUT OF HARMONY WITH THE EARTH...
BARRED FROM MY PLANET'S EMERALD HEART.. AND UNWILLING TO BURY... I SOUGHT SHELTER ELSEWHERE..
I JUMPED.
THE TURQUOISE FERNS AND DUCK-EGG PEBBLES... THE AQUARIUM LIGHT FILTERING THROUGH CLOUDS OF BLEACHED COBALT... THE REFLECTED GLINT OF PRUSSIAN MIDNIGHT FROM THE GRAZING BEETLE'S POLISHED SHELL...
EVERYTHING.
EVERYTHING'S BLUE.

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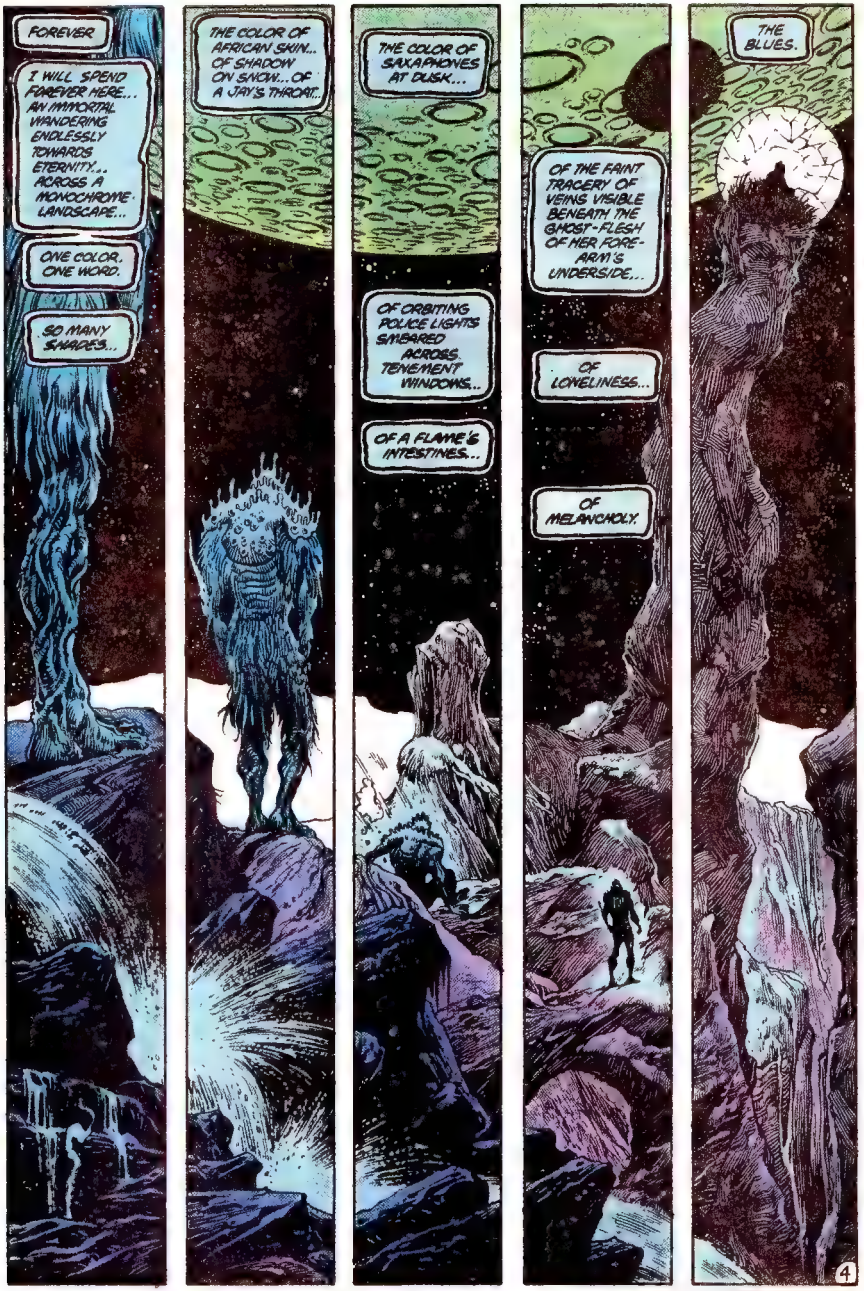
SWAMP THING
"MY BLUE HEAVEN"
CREATED BY LEN WEIN BERNI WRIGHTSON
ALAN MOORE WRITER
RICK VEITCH and ALFREDO ALCALA ARTISTS
TATJANA WOOD COLORIST
JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER
KAREN BERGER EDITOR
I JUMPED BLIND, INTO THE VOID... WAS A WORLD SHARING MY NEW FREQUENCY WITHIN REACH...?
WITHIN EXISTENCE...?
IN ENDLESS, HOWLING NOTHING... I CLUNG TO BLOBS OF MOSS ON LONELY METEORS... TAKING COMFORT BEFORE MOVING ON...
SET DOWN AT MY FEET... THE BEETLE ROLLS AWAY FROM ME, A BEAD OF DARK BLUE INK... TRICKLING DOWNHILL TO JOIN THE REST OF THE HERD... THROUGH FLOWERS THE COLOR OF ICE... SEPTEMBER SKY...
...ABBY'S EYES...
I RAN TOWARDS HER... MISSED HER... BURNED.
I HELD HER DELICATE BODY ONLY BRIEFLY... AND WILL NEVER SEE HER AGAIN...
PERHAPS... ONLY THIS WORLD... WILL MAKE ME NOW...?
THE NOCTURNAL BUTTERFLIES HERE SING LIKE BARELY AUDIBLE BIRDS...
NINETEEN DAYS HERE HAVE TAUGHT ME WHICH JUICES ATTRACT THEM...
FLUTTERING AROUND MY BROW... STAINED GLASS WINGS RIPPLING... A DISTANT CHOIR... SOOTHING ...DISTRACTING.
MUSTN'T THINK OF ABBY... MUSTN'T CONSIDER THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US... OR I SHALL SCREAM FOREVER... INTO THE SILENT BLUE.
2
5


FOREVER
I WILL SPEND FOREVER HERE... AN IMMORTAL WANDERING ENDLESSLY TOWARDS ETERNITY... ACROSS A MONOCHROME LANDSCAPE...
ONE COLOR. ONE WORD.
SO MANY SHADES...
THE COLOR OF AFRICAN SKIN... OF SHADOW ON SNOW... OF A JAY'S THROAT...
THE COLOR OF SAXAPHONES AT DUSK...
OF ORBITING POLICE LIGHTS SMEARED ACROSS TENEMENT WINDOWS...
OF A FLAME'S INTESTINES...
OF THE FAINT TRACERY OF VEINS VISIBLE BENEATH THE GHOST-FLESH OF HER FORE-ARM'S UNDERSIDE...
OF LONELINESS...
OF MELANCHOLY.
THE BLUES.
4

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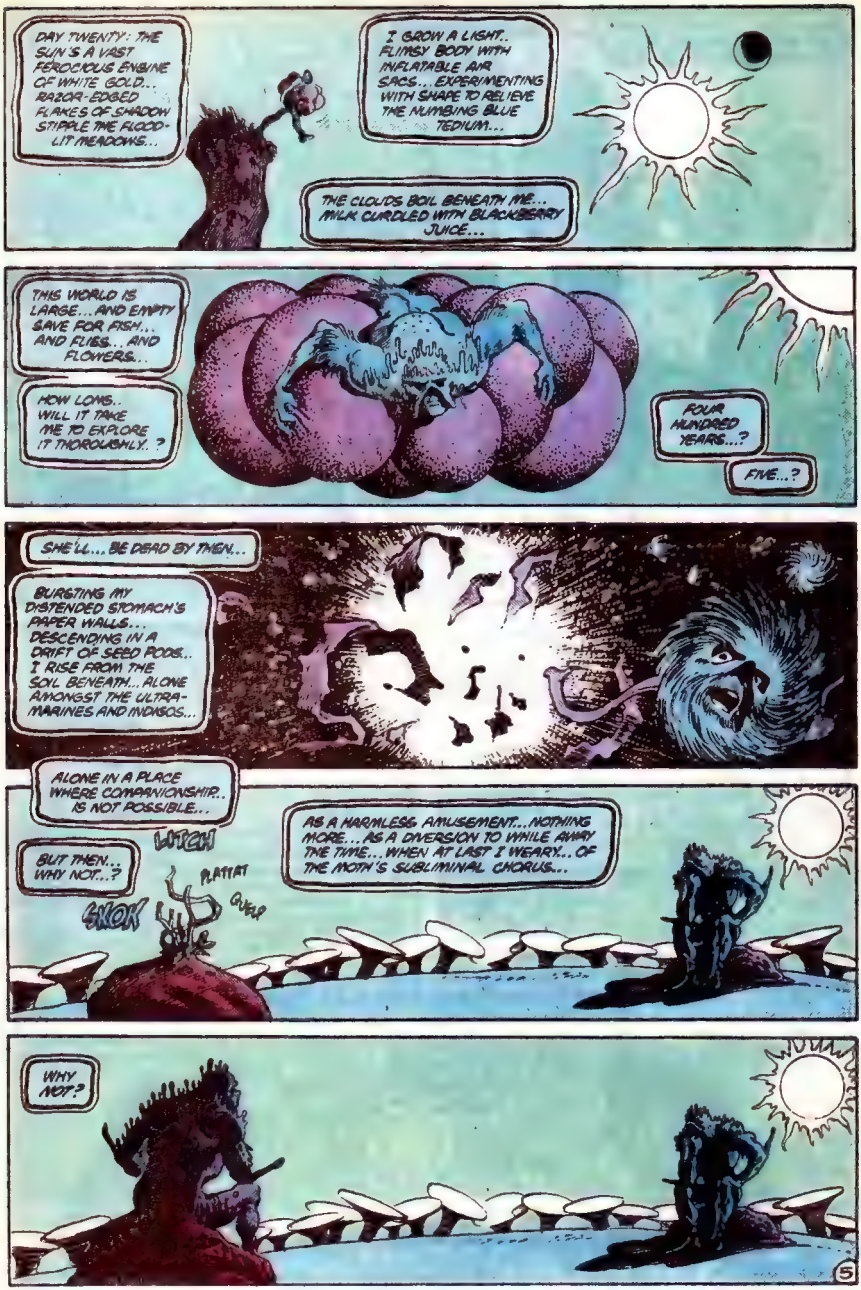
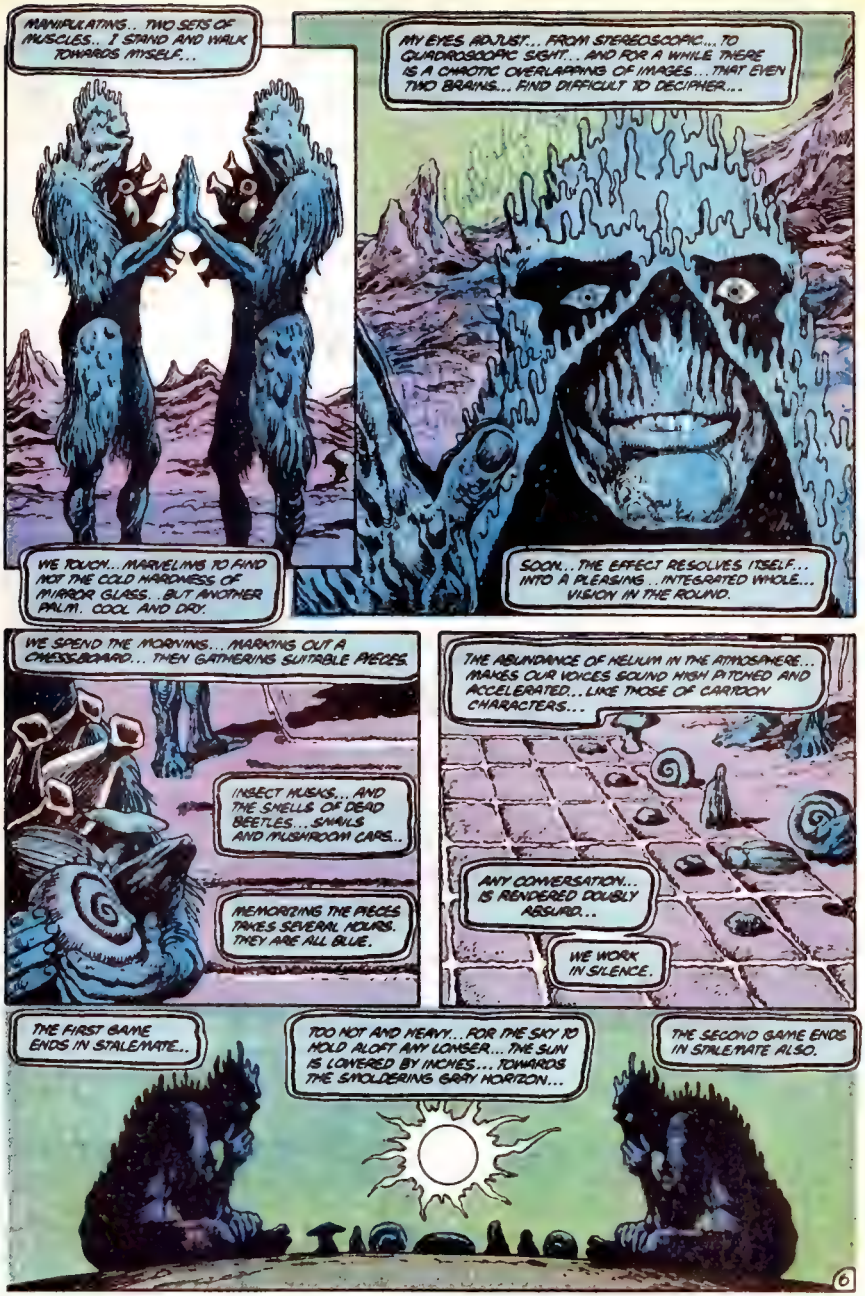
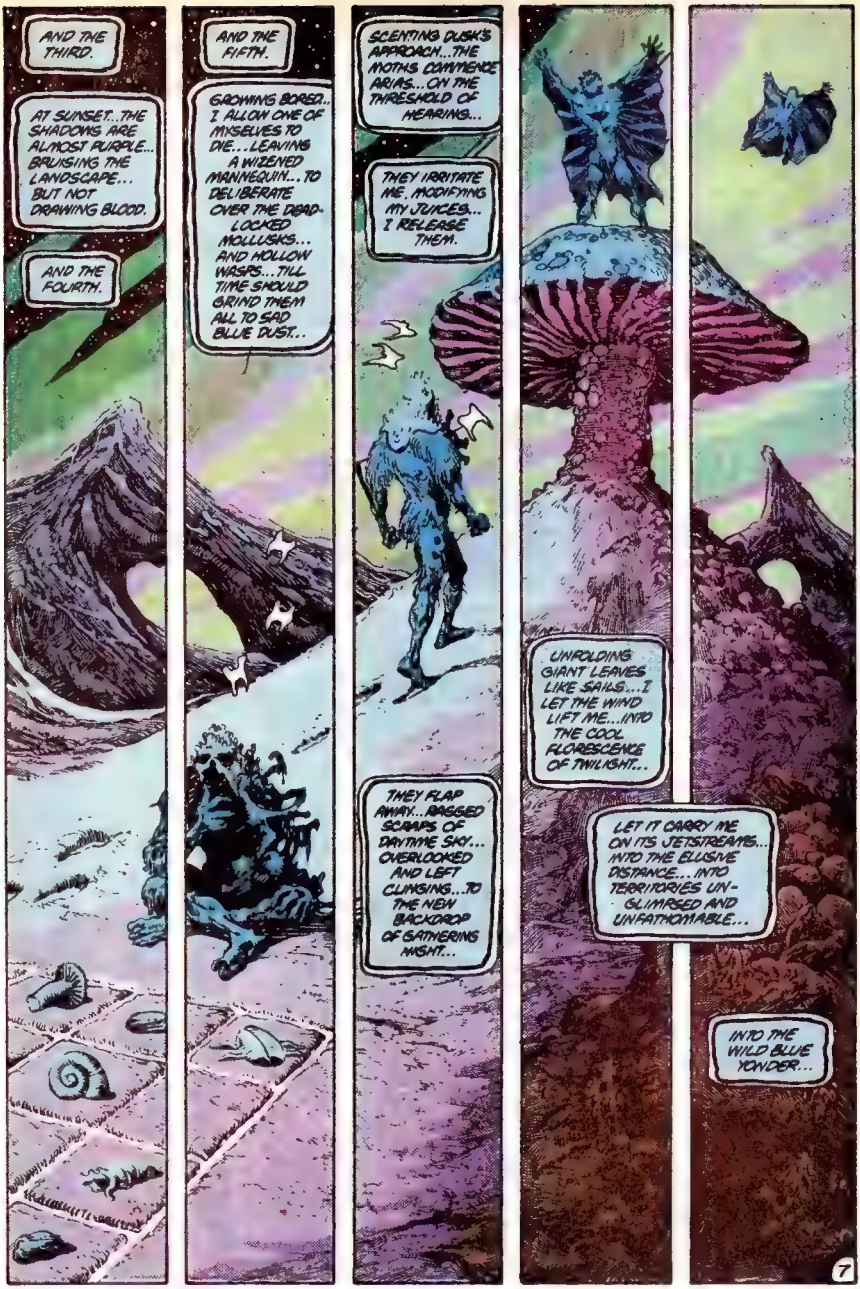
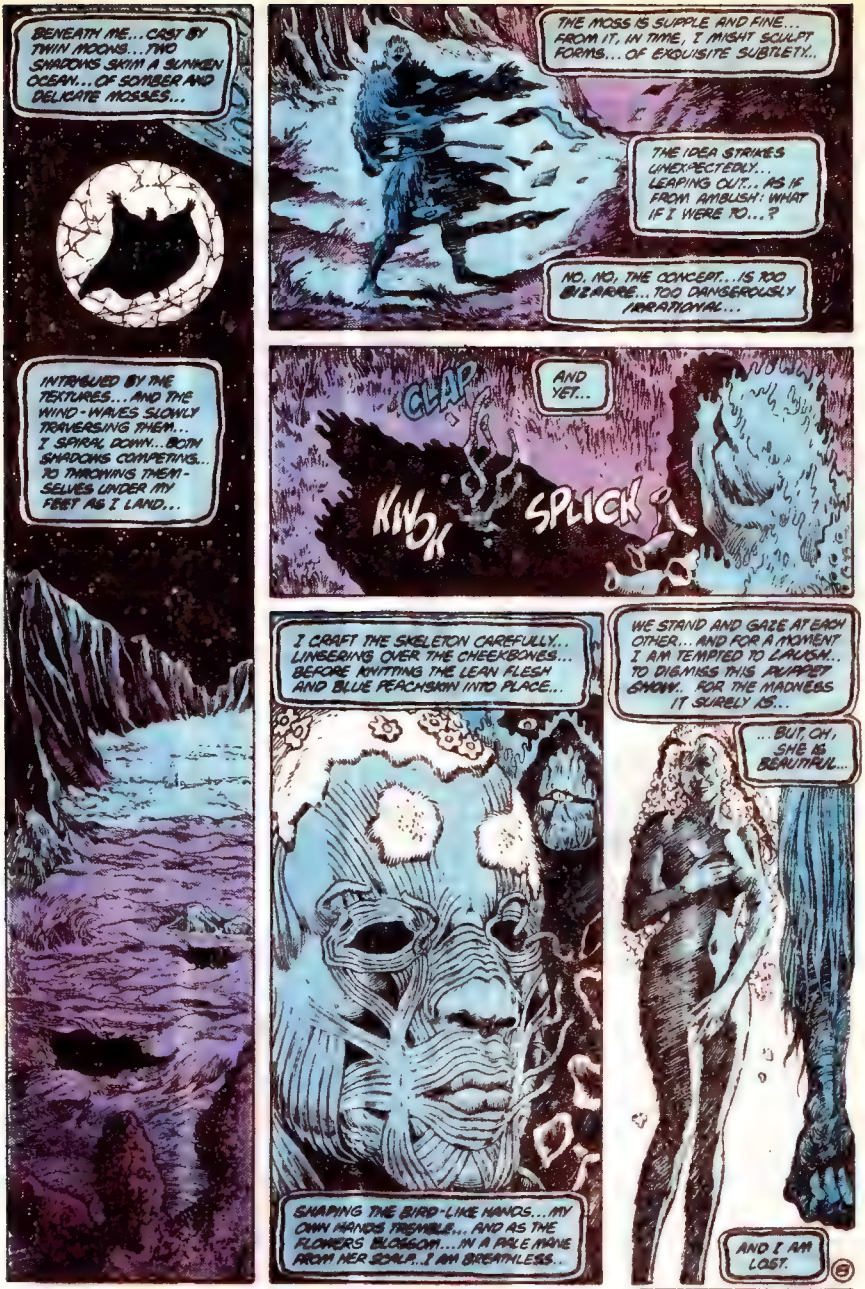
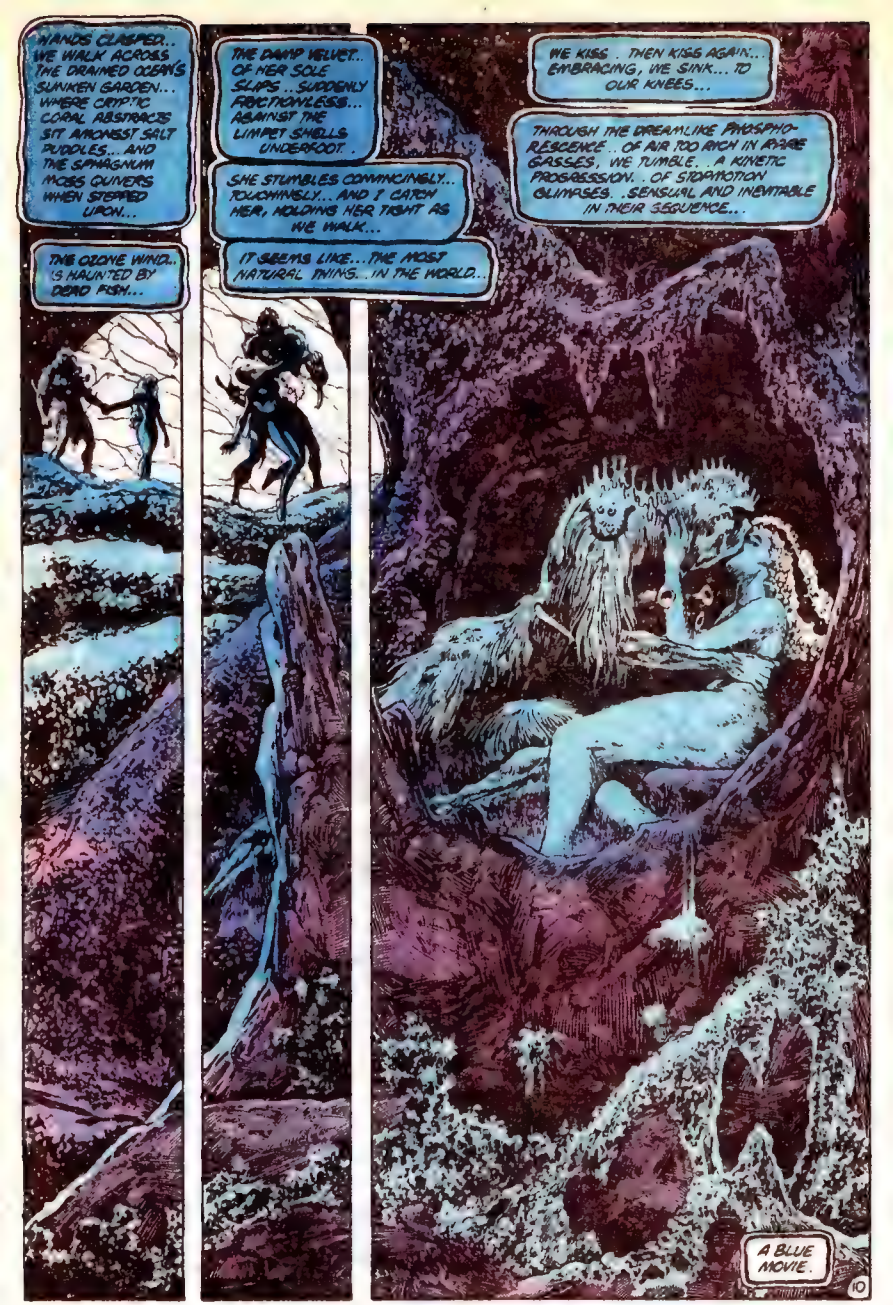

DAY TWENTY: THE SUN'S A VAST FEROCIOUS ENGINE OF WHITE GOLD... RAZOR-EDGED FLAKES OF SHADOW STIPPLE THE FLOOD-LIT MEADOWS...
I GROW A LIGHT.. FLIMSY BODY WITH INFLATABLE AIR SACS... EXPERIMENTING WITH SHAPE TO RELIEVE THE NUMBING BLUE TEDIUM...
THE CLOUDS BOIL BENEATH ME... MILK CURDLED WITH BLACKBERRY JUICE...
THIS WORLD IS LARGE... AND EMPTY SAVE FOR FISH... AND FLIES... AND FLOWERS...
HOW LONG.. WILL IT TAKE ME TO EXPLORE IT THOROUGHLY..?
FOUR HUNDRED YEARS...?
FIVE...?
SHE'LL... BE DEAD BY THEN...
BURSTING MY DISTENDED STOMACH'S PAPER WALLS... DESCENDING IN A DRIFT OF SEED PODS.. I RISE FROM THE SOIL BENEATH.. ALONE AMONGST THE ULTRA-MARINES AND INDIGOS...
ALONE IN A PLACE WHERE COMPANIONSHIP.. IS NOT POSSIBLE...
BUT THEN.. WHY NOT...?
AS A HARMLESS AMUSEMENT... NOTHING MORE... AS A DIVERSION TO WHILE AWAY THE TIME... WHEN AT LAST I WEARY.. OF THE MOTH'S SUBLIMINAL CHORUS...
WHY NOT?
5

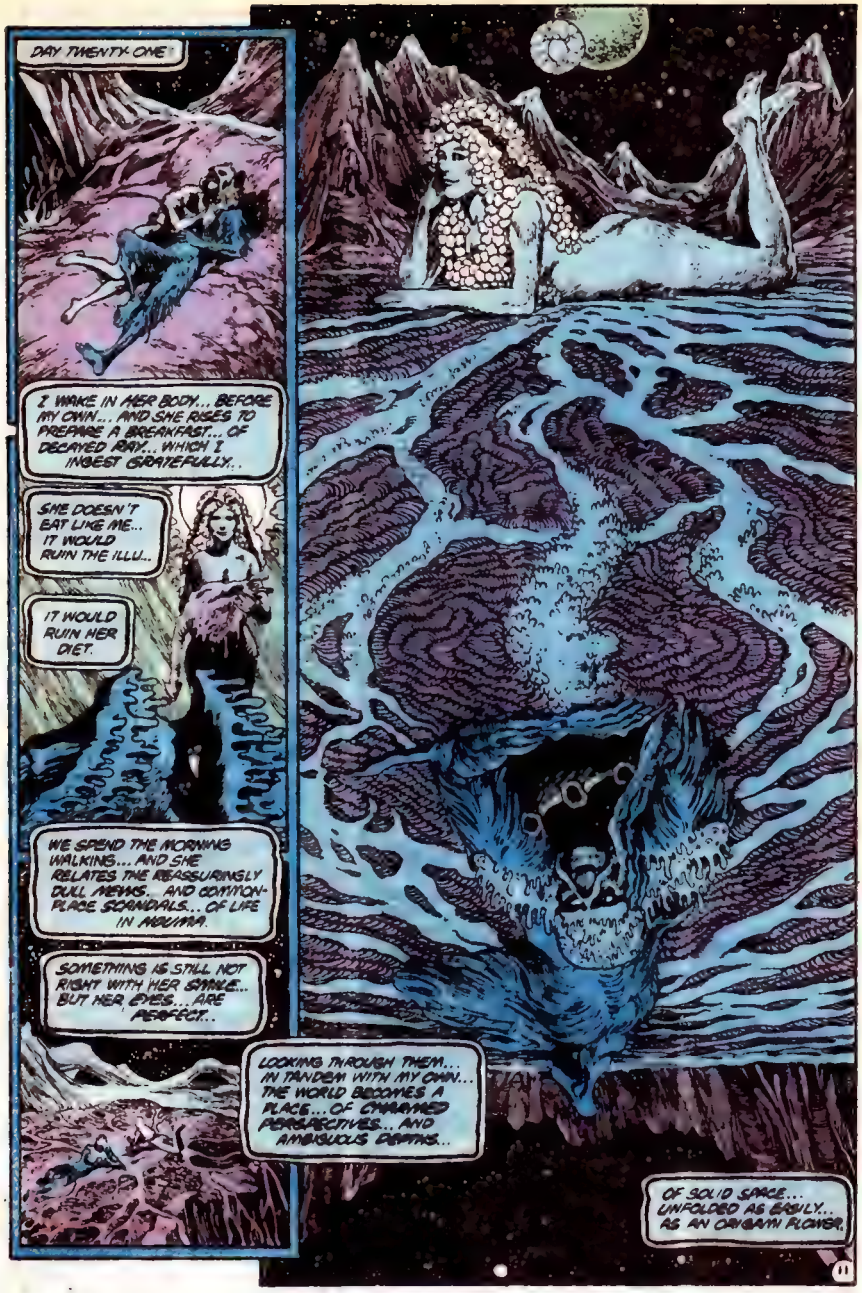

MANIPULATING.. TWO SETS OF MUSCLES.. I STAND AND WALK TOWARDS MYSELF...
MY EYES ADJUST... FROM STEREOSCOPIC... TO QUADROSCOPIC SIGHT... AND FOR A WHILE THERE IS A CHAOTIC OVERLAPPING OF IMAGES... THAT EVEN TWO BRAINS... FIND DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER...
WE TOUCH... MARVELING TO FIND NOT THE COLD HARDNESS OF MIRROR GLASS... BUT ANOTHER PALM. COOL AND DRY.
SOON... THE EFFECT RESOLVES ITSELF... INTO A PLEASING... INTEGRATED WHOLE... VISION IN THE ROUND.
WE SPEND THE MORNINGS... MARKING OUT A CHESSBOARD... THEN GATHERING SUITABLE PIECES.
INSECT HUSKS... AND THE SMELLS OF DEAD BEETLES... SNAILS AND MUSHROOM CAPS...
MEMORIZING THE PIECES TAKES SEVERAL HOURS. THEY ARE ALL BLUE.
THE ABUNDANCE OF HELIUM IN THE ATMOSPHERE... MAKES OUR VOICES SOUND HIGH PITCHED AND ACCELERATED... LIKE THOSE OF CARTOON CHARACTERS...
ANY CONVERSATION... IS RENDERED DOUBLY ABSURD...
WE WORK IN SILENCE.
THE FIRST GAME ENDS IN STALEMATE...
TOO HOT AND HEAVY... FOR THE SKY TO HOLD ALOFT ANY LONGER... THE SUN IS LOWERED BY INCHES... TOWARDS THE SMOLDERING GRAY HORIZON...
THE SECOND GAME ENDS IN STALEMATE ALSO.

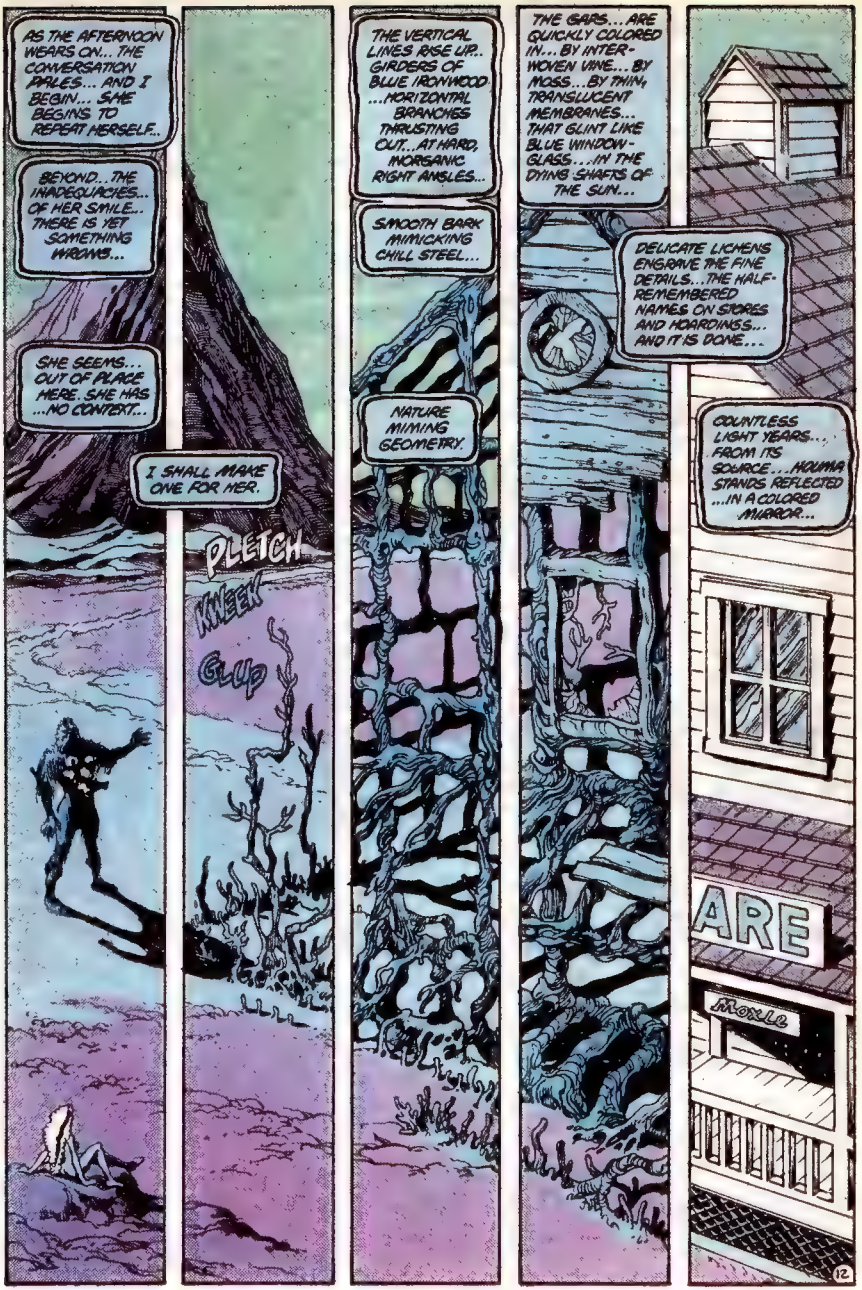

AND THE THIRD.
AT SUNSET...THE SHADOWS ARE ALMOST PURPLE... BRUISING THE LANDSCAPE... BUT NOT DRAWING BLOOD.
AND THE FOURTH.
AND THE FIFTH.
GROWING BORED.. I ALLOW ONE OF MYSELVES TO DIE...LEAVING A WIZENED MANNEQUIN...TO DELIBERATE OVER THE DEAD-LOCKED MOLLUSKS... AND HOLLOW WASPS...TILL TIME SHOULD GRIND THEM ALL TO SAD BLUE DUST...
SCENTING DUSK'S APPROACH...THE MOTHS COMMENCE ARIAS...ON THE THRESHOLD OF HEARING...
THEY IRRITATE ME, MODIFYING MY JUICES... I RELEASE THEM.
THEY FLAP AWAY...RAGGED SCRAPS OF DAYTIME SKY... OVERLOOKED AND LEFT CLINGING...TO THE NEW BACKDROP OF GATHERING NIGHT...
UNFOLDING GIANT LEAVES LIKE SAILS...I LET THE WIND LIFT ME...INTO THE COOL FLORESCENCE OF TWILIGHT...
LET IT CARRY ME ON ITS JETSTREAMS... INTO THE ELUSIVE DISTANCE... INTO TERRITORIES UN-GLIMPSED AND UNFATHOMABLE...
INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER...

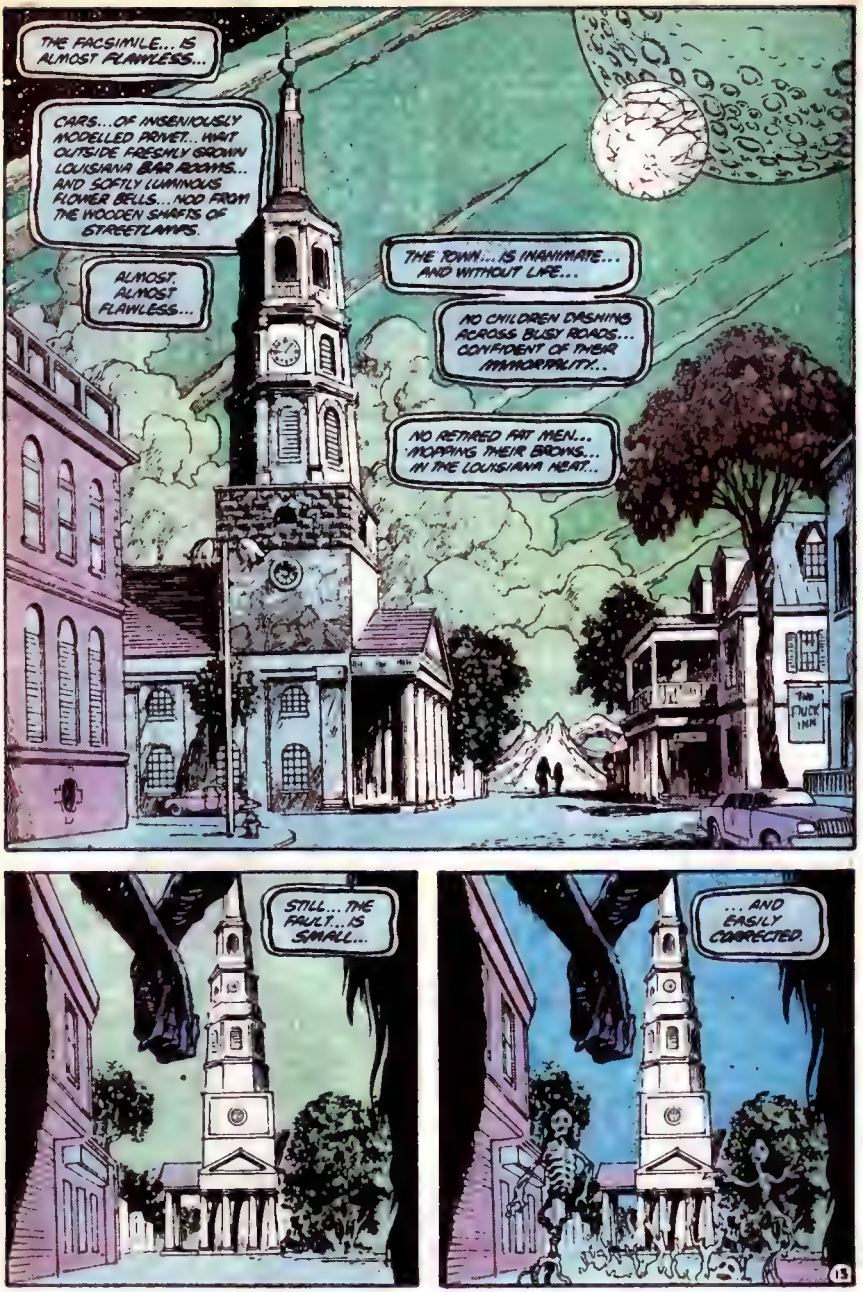

BENEATH ME... CAST BY TWIN MOONS... TWO SHADOWS SKIM A SUNKEN OCEAN... OF SOMBER AND DELICATE MOSSES...
INTRIGUED BY THE TEXTURES... AND THE WIND-WAVES SLOWLY TRAVERSING THEM... I SPIRAL DOWN... BOTH SHADOWS COMPETING... TO THROWING THEMSELVES UNDER MY FEET AS I LAND...
THE MOSS IS SUPPLE AND FINE... FROM IT, IN TIME, I MIGHT SCULPT FORMS... OF EXQUISITE SUBTLETY...
THE IDEA STRIKES UNEXPECTEDLY... LEAPING OUT... AS IF FROM AMBUSH: WHAT IF I WERE TO...?
NO, NO, THE CONCEPT... IS TOO BIZARRE... TOO DANGEROUSLY IRRATIONAL...
AND YET...
CLAP
KNOK
SPLICK
I CRAFT THE SKELETON CAREFULLY... LINGERING OVER THE CHEEKBONES... BEFORE KNITTING THE LEAN FLESH AND BLUE PEACHSKIN INTO PLACE...
SHAPING THE BIRD-LIKE HANDS... MY OWN HANDS TREMBLE... AND AS THE FLOWERS BLOSSOM... IN A PALE MANE FROM HER SCALP... I AM BREATHLESS...
WE STAND AND GAZE AT EACH OTHER... AND FOR A MOMENT I AM TEMPTED TO LAUGH... TO DISMISS THIS PUPPET SHOW... FOR THE MADNESS IT SURELY IS...
...BUT, OH, SHE IS BEAUTIFUL...
AND I AM LOST.
8
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

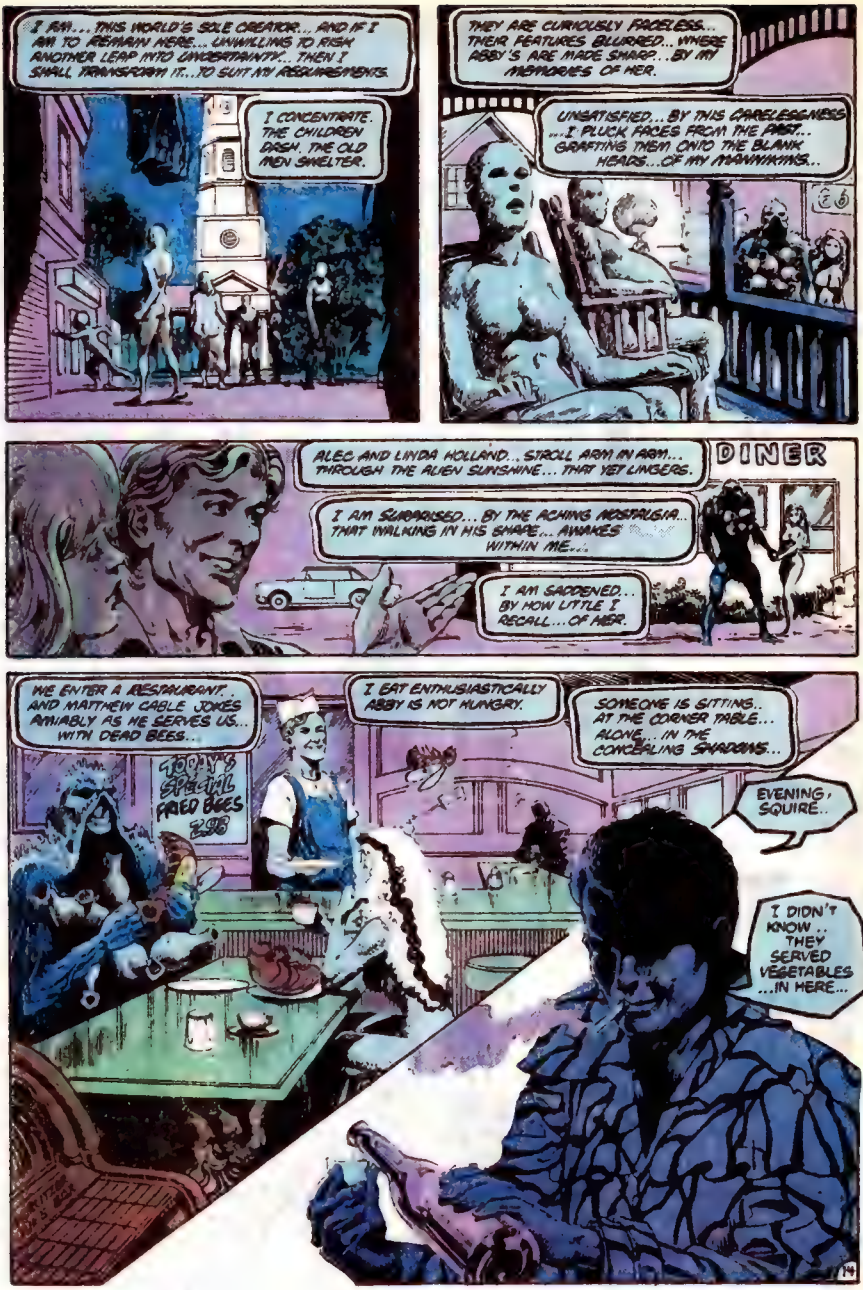
MOVING MY... HER LEGS, I WALK... NO, NO, SHE. SHE WALKS... TOWARDS ME...
THE NOVELTY OF HER BODY... HER MOTION... THE SWING OF HER STEP... THE INCLINATION OF HER SPINE... COUNTERBALANCING THE SMALL... CONSTANT WEIGHT... OF HER BREASTS...
TO KNOW HER SO THOROUGHLY... TO FEEL WHAT SHE FEELS IS... INTOXICATING. SHE IS SO MUCH SMALLER... HER POINT OF VIEW LOWER THAN MINE...
THROUGH HER EYES... I LOOK SO LARGE...
I HAD NOT REALIZED.
OH, ABBY...
ABBY
I THICKEN HER VOCAL CORDS... TO COMPENSATE FOR THE HELIUM... AND FILL HER LUNGS WITH AIR. WHAT... WOULD SHE SAY? HOW WOULD... SHE PHRASE IT...?
HI... ALEC...
HOW... HAVE YOU BEEN...?
I TELL HER... THAT I'VE BEEN FINE... AND IN RESPONSE... I ATTEMPT HER SMILE...
HER LIPS CURVE... SUCCULENT AND LUSTROUS AS BLUE GRAPES...
THE SMILE... LACKING SUBTLETY... IS NOT ENTIRELY RIGHT. MY THROAT... TIGHTENS REGARDLESS...
9


HANDS CLASPED.. WE WALK ACROSS THE DRAINED OCEAN'S SUNKEN GARDEN... WHERE CRYPTIC CORAL ABSTRACTS SIT AMONGST SALT PUDDLES... AND THE SPHAGNUM MOSS QUIVERS WHEN STEPPED UPON...
THE OZONE WIND.. IS HAUNTED BY DEAD FISH...
THE DAMP VELVET.. OF HER SOLE SLAPS.. SUDDENLY FRICTIONLESS... AGAINST THE LIMPET SHELLS UNDERFOOT..
SHE STUMBLES CONVINCINGLY.. TOUCHINGLY... AND I CATCH HER, HOLDING HER TIGHT AS WE WALK...
IT SEEMS LIKE... THE MOST NATURAL THING... IN THE WORLD...
WE KISS.. THEN KISS AGAIN... EMBRACING, WE SINK... TO OUR KNEES...
THROUGH THE DREAMLIKE PHOSPHO-RESCENCE.. OF AIR TOO RICH IN RARE GASSES, WE TUMBLE.. A KINETIC PROGRESSION.. OF SLO-MOTION GLIMPSES.. SENSUAL AND INEVITABLE IN THEIR SEQUENCE...
A BLUE MOVIE.

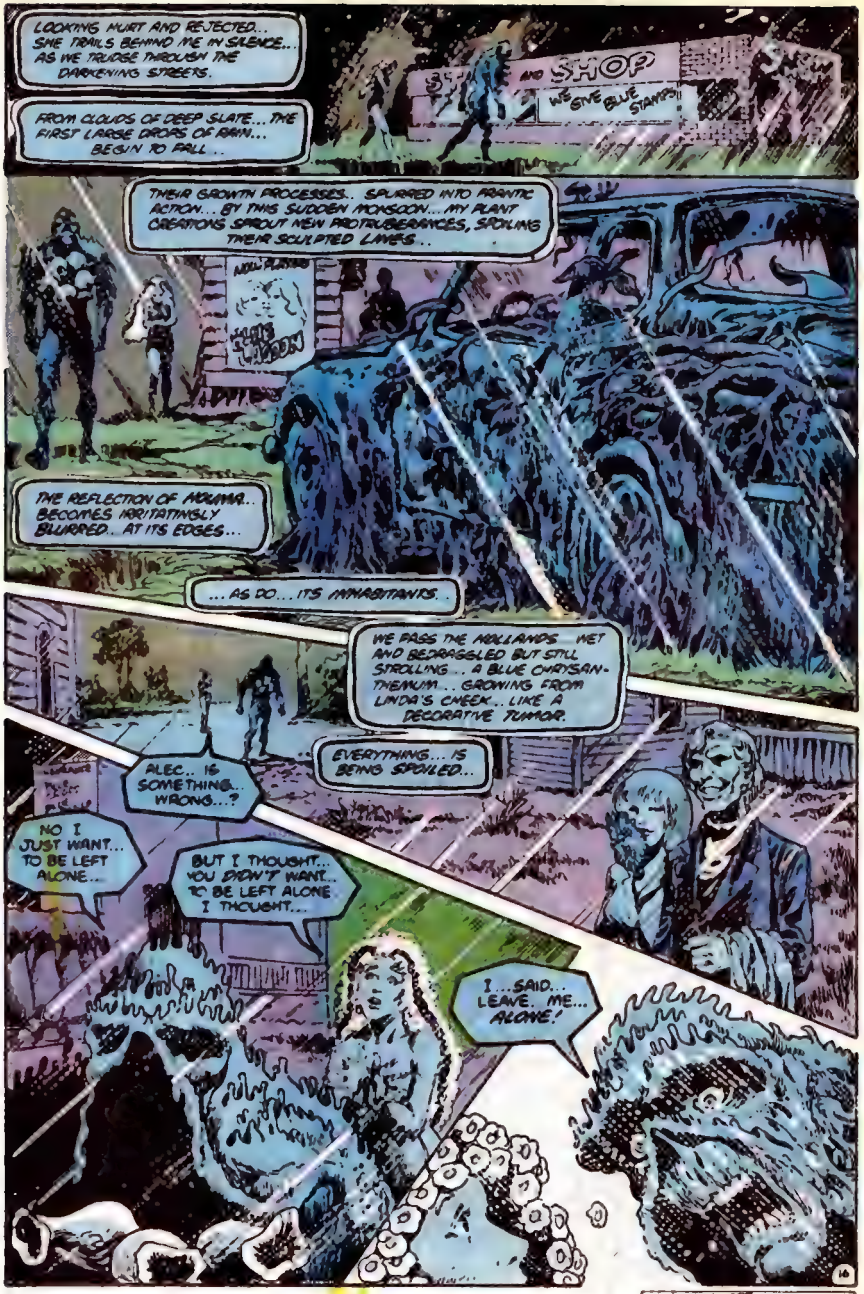

DAY TWENTY-ONE.
I WAKE IN HER BODY... BEFORE MY OWN... AND SHE RISES TO PREPARE A BREAKFAST... OF DECAYED RAT... WHICH I INGEST GRATEFULLY...
SHE DOESN'T EAT LIKE ME... IT WOULD RUIN THE ILLU...
IT WOULD RUIN HER DIET.
WE SPEND THE MORNING WALKING... AND SHE RELATES THE REASSURINGLY DULL NEWS... AND COMMON-PLACE SCANDALS... OF LIFE IN ABUJMA.
SOMETHING IS STILL NOT RIGHT WITH HER SMILE... BUT HER EYES... ARE PERFECT...
LOOKING THROUGH THEM... IN TANDEM WITH MY OWN... THE WORLD BECOMES A PLACE... OF CHARMED PERSPECTIVES... AND AMBIGUOUS DEPTHS...
OF SOLID SPACE... UNFOLDED AS EASILY... AS AN ORIGAMI FLOWER.
11


AS THE AFTERNOON WEARS ON... THE CONVERSATION PALES... AND I BEGIN... SHE BEGINS TO REPEAT HERSELF...
BEYOND... THE INADEQUACIES... OF HER SMILE... THERE IS YET SOMETHING WRONG...
SHE SEEMS... OUT OF PLACE HERE. SHE HAS ...NO CONTEXT...
I SHALL MAKE ONE FOR HER.
PLETCH
KLEEK
GLUP
THE VERTICAL LINES RISE UP... GIRDERS OF BLUE IRONWOOD ...HORIZONTAL BRANCHES THRUSTING OUT... AT HARD, INORGANIC RIGHT ANGLES...
SMOOTH BARK MIMICKING CHILL STEEL...
NATURE MIMING GEOMETRY.
THE GAPS... ARE QUICKLY COLORED IN... BY INTER-WOVEN VINE... BY MOSS... BY THIN, TRANSLUCENT MEMBRANES... THAT GLINT LIKE BLUE WINDOW-GLASS... IN THE DYING SHAFTS OF THE SUN...
DELICATE LICHENS ENGRAVE THE FINE DETAILS... THE HALF-REMEMBERED NAMES ON STORES AND HOARDINGS... AND IT IS DONE...
COUNTLESS LIGHT YEARS... FROM ITS SOURCE... HOUMA STANDS REFLECTED ...IN A COLORED MIRROR...
ARE
MORLA
12


THE FACSIMILE... IS ALMOST FLAWLESS...
CARS... OF INGENIOUSLY MODELLED PRIVET... HAIT OUTSIDE FRESHLY GROWN LOUISIANA BAR ROOMS... AND SOFTLY LUMINOUS FLOWER BELLS... NOD FROM THE WOODEN SHAFTS OF STREETLAMPS.
ALMOST, ALMOST FLAWLESS...
THE TOWN... IS INANIMATE... AND WITHOUT LIFE...
NO CHILDREN DASHING ACROSS BUSY ROADS... CONFIDENT OF THEIR IMMORTALITY...
NO RETIRED FAT MEN... MOPPING THEIR BROWS... IN THE LOUISIANA HEAT...
THE DUCK INN
STILL... THE FAULT... IS SMALL...
... AND EASILY CORRECTED.
13


I AM... THIS WORLD'S SOLE CREATOR... AND IF I AM TO REMAIN HERE... UNWILLING TO RISK ANOTHER LEAP INTO UNCERTAINTY... THEN I SHALL TRANSFORM IT... TO SUIT MY REQUIREMENTS.
I CONCENTRATE. THE CHILDREN DASH. THE OLD MEN SHELTER.
THEY ARE CURIOUSLY FACELESS... THEIR FEATURES BLURRED... WHERE ABBY'S ARE MADE SHARP... BY MY MEMORIES OF HER.
UNSATISFIED... BY THIS CARELESSNESS ... I PLUCK FACES FROM THE PAST... GRAFTING THEM ONTO THE BLANK HEADS... OF MY MANNIKINS...
ALEC AND LINDA HOLLAND... STROLL ARM IN ARM... THROUGH THE ALIEN SUNSHINE... THAT YET LINGERS.
DINER
I AM SUBDUED... BY THE ACHING NOSTALGIA... THAT WALKING IN HIS SHADE... AWAKES WITHIN ME...
I AM SADDENED... BY HOW LITTLE I RECALL... OF HER.
WE ENTER A RESTAURANT... AND MATTHEW CABLE JOKES AMIABLY AS HE SERVES US... WITH DEAD BEES...
TODAY'S SPECIAL FRIED BEES $.98
I EAT ENTHUSIASTICALLY ABBY IS NOT HUNGRY.
SOMEONE IS SITTING... AT THE CORNER TABLE... ALONE... IN THE CONCEALING SHADOWS...
EVENING, SQUIRE..
I DIDN'T KNOW.. THEY SERVED VEGETABLES ...IN HERE...
14

HE WALKS TOWARDS US... BETWEEN THE TABLES.
CONSTANTINE...? WHAT ARE YOU... DOING HERE...?
I... COULD ASK YOU... THE SAME QUESTION...
STRANGE. I DO NOT RECALL... CREATING HIM. NOT.. IN SUCH SPECIFIC DETAIL... NOT CONSCIOUSLY...
...BUT THEN I'VE NEVER BEEN FOND... OF TALKING TO MYSELF...
HE DRAWS UPON HIS CIGARETTE... AND EXHALES A CLOUD OF ACRID BLUE PALLOR...
ALEC...? WHAT... DOES HE MEAN...?
NOTHING.
CONSTANTINE... YOU ARE UPSETTING MY WIFE.. AND I DO NOT LIKE... THE TONE OF YOUR CONVERSATION.
I ONLY SPEAK THE WORDS... THAT YOU PUT IN MY MOUTH...
...AND I ONLY SPEAK THE TRUTH.
YOU... ARE MOTHING. YOU ARE A NAGGING VOICE INSIDE ME... SPEAKING THROUGH BORROWED LIPS...
COME, MY LOVE... LET US LEAVE... THIS PLACE.
LEAVE ? WHY NOT SIMPLY... LET ME FALL APART... INTO A TANGLE... OF CREEPERS...?
...OR WOULD THAT... SPOIL THE ILLUSION...?
SENSING THAT I AM ANGRY... ABBY TRIES TO PLACATE ME... WITH AN ANXIOUS... AND COMFORTING SMILE...
IT LOOKS WRONG.
15


LOOKING HURT AND REJECTED... SHE TRAILS BEHIND ME IN SILENCE... AS WE TRUDGE THROUGH THE DARKENING STREETS.
FROM CLOUDS OF DEEP SLATE... THE FIRST LARGE DROPS OF RAIN... BEGIN TO FALL...
AND SHOP
WE GIVE BLUE STAMPS!!
THEIR GROWTH PROCESSES... SPURRED INTO FRANTIC ACTION... BY THIS SUDDEN MONSOON... MY PLANT CREATIONS SPROUT NEW PROTUBERANCES, SPOILING THEIR SCULPTED LINES...
NOW PLAYING
THE REFLECTION OF MOLLY... BECOMES IRRITATINGLY BLURRED... AT ITS EDGES...
...AS DO... ITS INHABITANTS...
WE PASS THE MOLLANDS... WET AND BEDRAGGLED BUT STILL STROLLING... A BLUE CHRYSANTHEMUM... GROWING FROM LINDA'S CHEEK... LIKE A DECORATIVE TUMOR.
EVERYTHING... IS BEING SPOILED...
ALEC... IS SOMETHING... WRONG...?
NO I JUST WANT... TO BE LEFT ALONE...
BUT I THOUGHT... YOU DIDN'T WANT... TO BE LEFT ALONE... I THOUGHT...
I... SAID... LEAVE... ME... ALONE!
16
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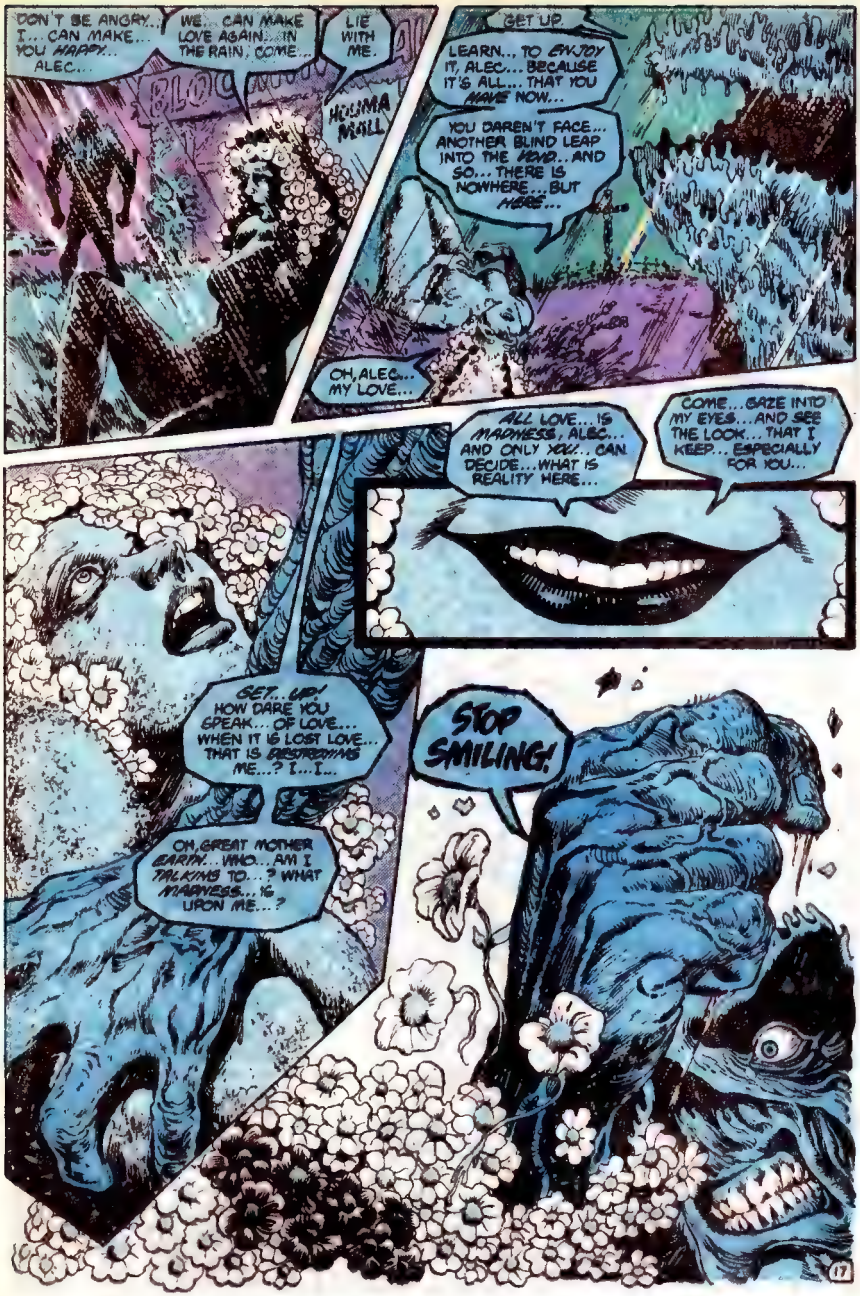
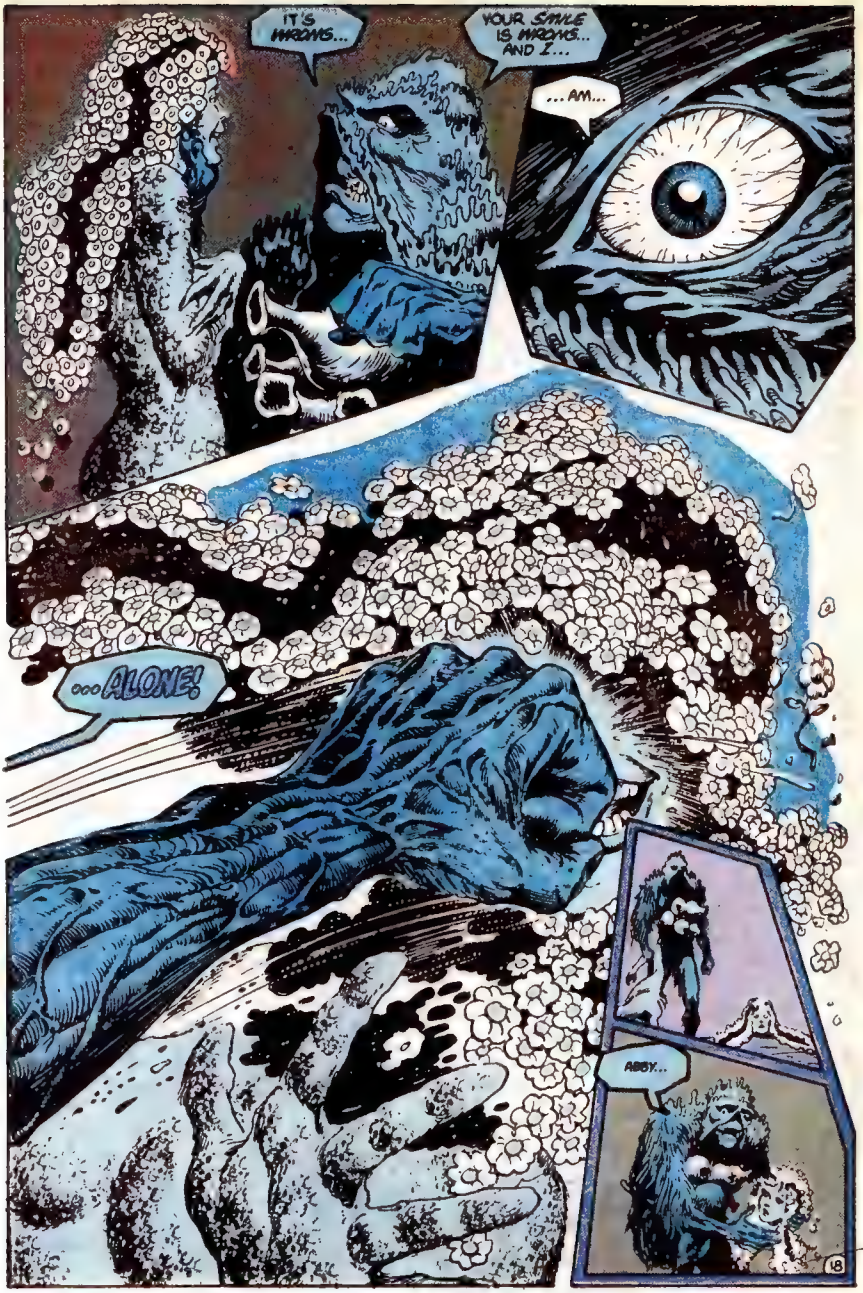
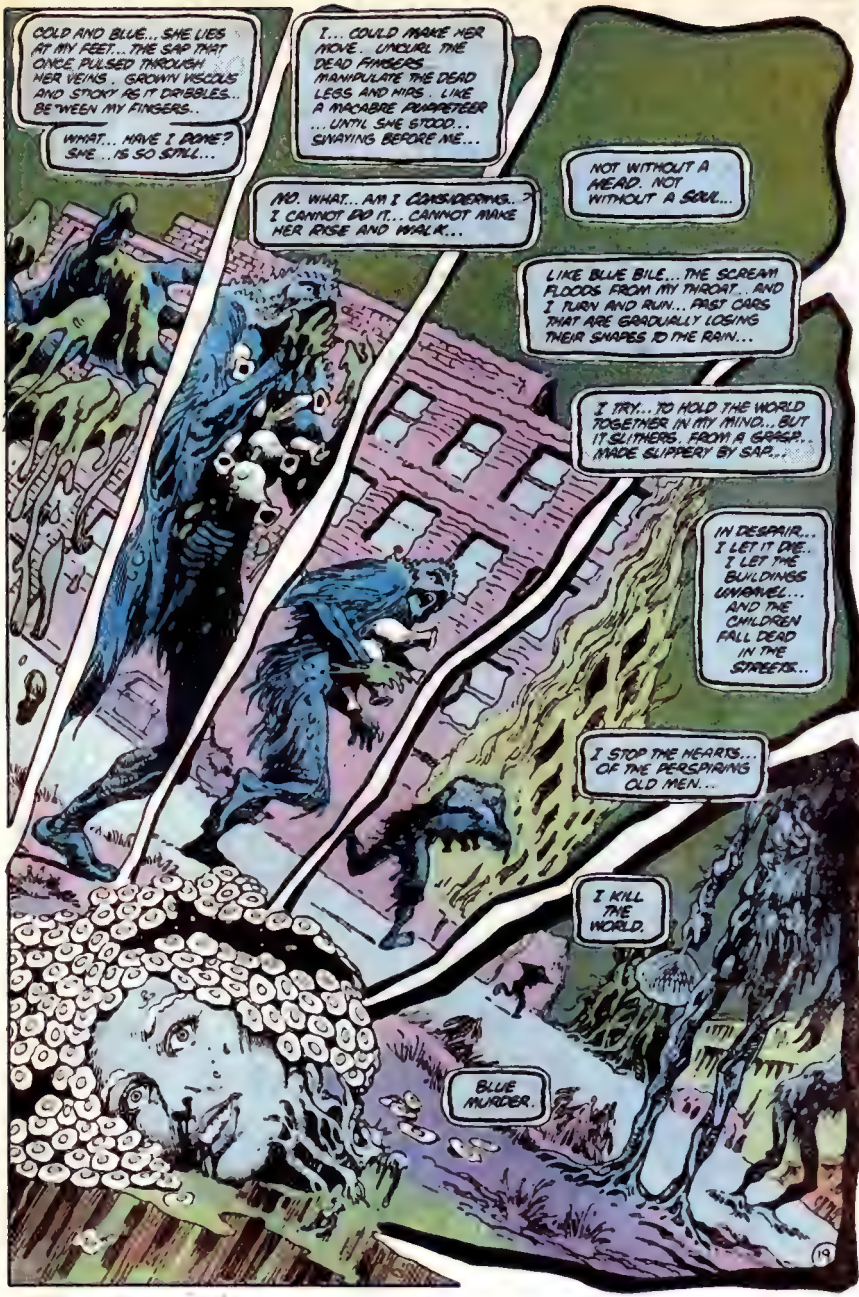

DON'T BE ANGRY... I... CAN MAKE... YOU HAPPY... ALEC...
WE... CAN MAKE LOVE AGAIN... IN THE RAIN, COME...
LIE WITH ME.
HELIUMA MALL
GET UP.
LEARN... TO ENJOY IT, ALEC... BECAUSE IT'S ALL... THAT YOU HAVE NOW...
YOU DAREN'T FACE... ANOTHER BLIND LEAP INTO THE VOID... AND SO... THERE IS NOWHERE... BUT HERE...
OH, ALEC... MY LOVE...
ALL LOVE... IS MADNESS, ALEC... AND ONLY YOU... CAN DECIDE... WHAT IS REALITY HERE...
COME... GAZE INTO MY EYES... AND SEE THE LOOK... THAT I KEEP... ESPECIALLY FOR YOU...
GET... UP! HOW DARE YOU SPEAK... OF LOVE... WHEN IT IS LOST LOVE... THAT IS DESTROYING ME...? I... I...
OH, GREAT MOTHER EARTH... WHO... AM I TALKING TO...? WHAT MADNESS... IS UPON ME...?
STOP SMILING!
HA! HA!

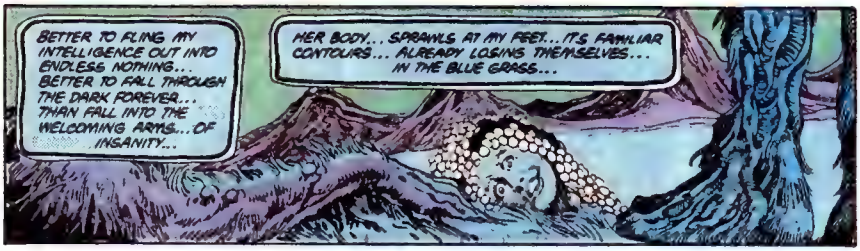

IT'S HRONS...
YOUR SMILE IS HRONS... AND I...
...AM...
...ALONE!
ABBY...

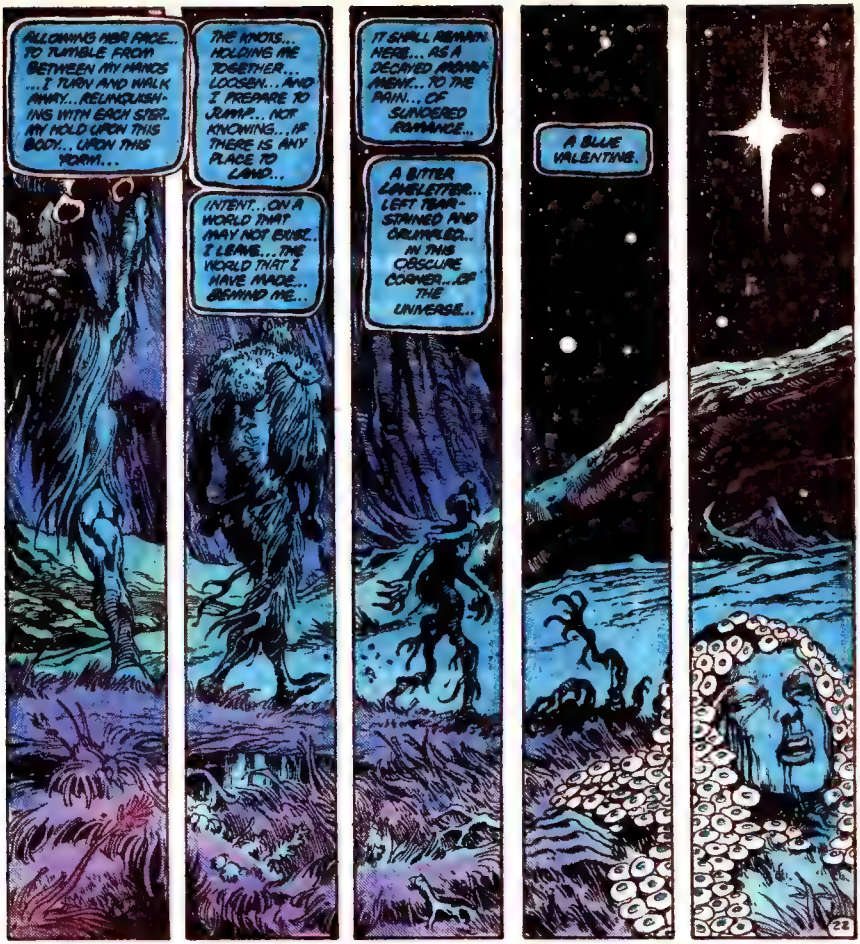

COLD AND BLUE... SHE LIES AT MY FEET... THE SAP THAT ONCE PULSED THROUGH HER VEINS... GROWN VISCOUS AND STICKY AS IT DRIBBLES... BE'WEEN MY FINGERS..
WHAT... HAVE I DONE? SHE... IS SO STILL...
I... COULD MAKE HER MOVE... UNCURL THE DEAD FINGERS... MANIPULATE THE DEAD LEGS AND MIRE... LIKE A MACABRE PUPPETEER ...UNTIL SHE STOOD... SWAYING BEFORE ME...
NO. WHAT... AM I CONSIDERING... I CANNOT DO IT... CANNOT MAKE HER RISE AND WALK...
NOT WITHOUT A HEAD. NOT WITHOUT A SOUL...
LIKE BLUE BILE... THE SCREAM FLOODS FROM MY THROAT.. AND I TURN AND RUN... PAST CARS THAT ARE GRADUALLY LOSING THEIR SHAPES TO THE RAIN...
I TRY... TO HOLD THE WORLD TOGETHER IN MY MIND... BUT IT SLITHERS FROM A GRASP... MADE SLIPPERY BY SAP...
IN DESPAIR... I LET IT DIE.. I LET THE BUILDINGS UNRAVEL... AND THE CHILDREN FALL DEAD IN THE STREETS...
I STOP THE HEARTS... OF THE PERSPIRING OLD MEN...
I KILL THE WORLD.
BLUE MURDER.

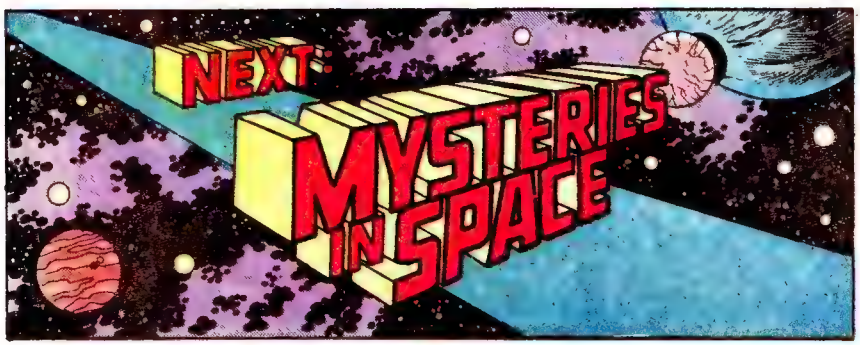
I PASS THE HOLLANDS... KNITTED TOGETHER BY THEIR REBELLIOUS FLESH...
HIS HAND... GROWS THROUGH HER BACK... AND INTO HER STOMACH HER BREASTS MELT AND FLATTEN... SPREADING UPWARDS... TO ENSULF HIS SHOULDERS...
THEIR LIFELESS EMBRACE... IS SUFFUSED... BY A HIDEOUS SEXUALITY...
MATT CABLE... WAITS ON THE CORNER... PARTLY FUSED... WITH THE STREETLAMP... HE LEANS AGAINST...
HIS SEGMENTED SKULL... OPENS LIKE A FLOWER... AND MOTHS HUM ABSENTMINDEDLY... LICKING POLLEN... FROM HIS BRAINS...
HOW? HOW... HAVE I BUILT MYSELF THIS PRISON...?
THIS PURGATORY?
AND... AFTER A TIME... THE MADNESS PASSES.
20
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING

RISING... I LOOK ABOUT ME. THE RAIN HAS STOPPED... THE REMAINS OF ABUMA... LYING DEFLATED... AMONGST ITS PUDDLES.
THE NAMES... ON THE STOREFRONTS AND STREETSIGNS... HAVE GROWN EXTRA CURLICUES... METAMORPHOSING... INTO ARABIC...

I PICK MY WAY... AMONGST THE RUINED DREAMS... ACCOMPANIED BY THE BEETLE HERDS... THAT THREAD THEIR WAY... THROUGH HALF-DISSOLVED STREETS... ENDLESSLY SEARCHING FOR FOOD...
I MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE.
I HAVE NO CHOYCE.


BETTER TO FLING MY INTELLIGENCE OUT INTO ENDLESS NOTHING... BETTER TO FALL THROUGH THE DARK FOREVER... THAN FALL INTO THE WELCOMING ARMS... OF INSANITY...
HER BODY... SPRAWLS AT MY FEET... IT'S FAMILIAR CONTOURS... ALREADY LOSING THEMSELVES... IN THE BLUE GRASS...


ALLOWING HER FACE... TO TUMBLE FROM BETWEEN MY HANDS. I TURN AND WALK AWAY... RELINQUISHING WITH EACH STEP... MY HOLD UPON THIS BODY... UPON THIS WORLD...
THE KNOTS... HOLDING ME TOGETHER... LOOSEN... AND I PREPARE TO JUMP... NOT KNOWING... IF THERE IS ANY PLACE TO LAND...
INTENT... ON A WORLD THAT MAY NOT EXIST. I LEAVE... THE WORLD THAT I HAVE MADE... BEHIND ME...
IT SHALL REMAIN HERE... AS A DECAYED MONUMENT... TO THE PAIN... OF SUNDERED ROMANCE...
A BITTER LOVELETTER... LEFT TEAR-STAINED AND CRUMPLED... IN THIS OBSCURE CORNER... OF THE UNIVERSE...
A BLUE VALENTINE.
22


NEXT:
MYSTERIES IN SPACE

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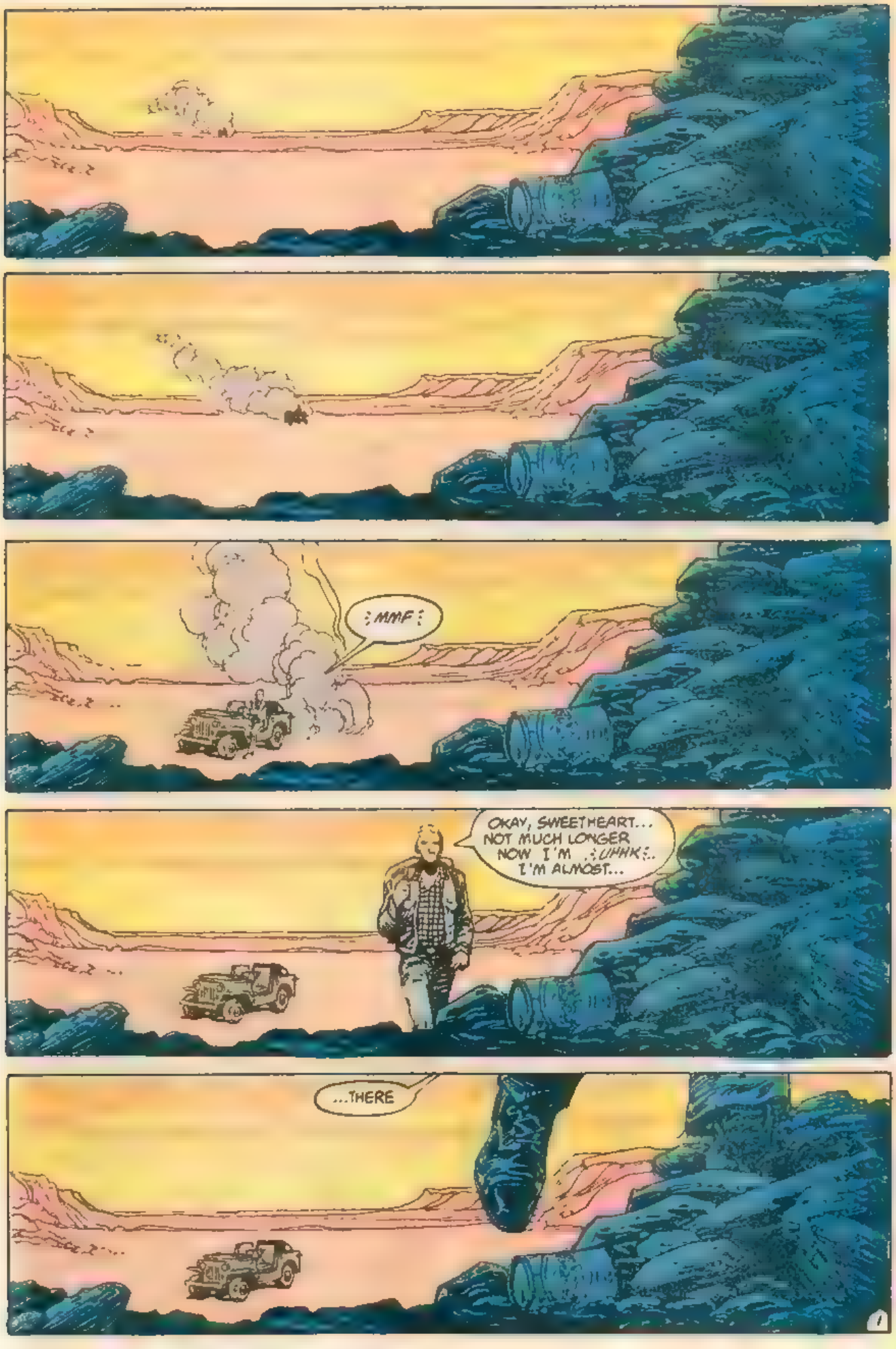
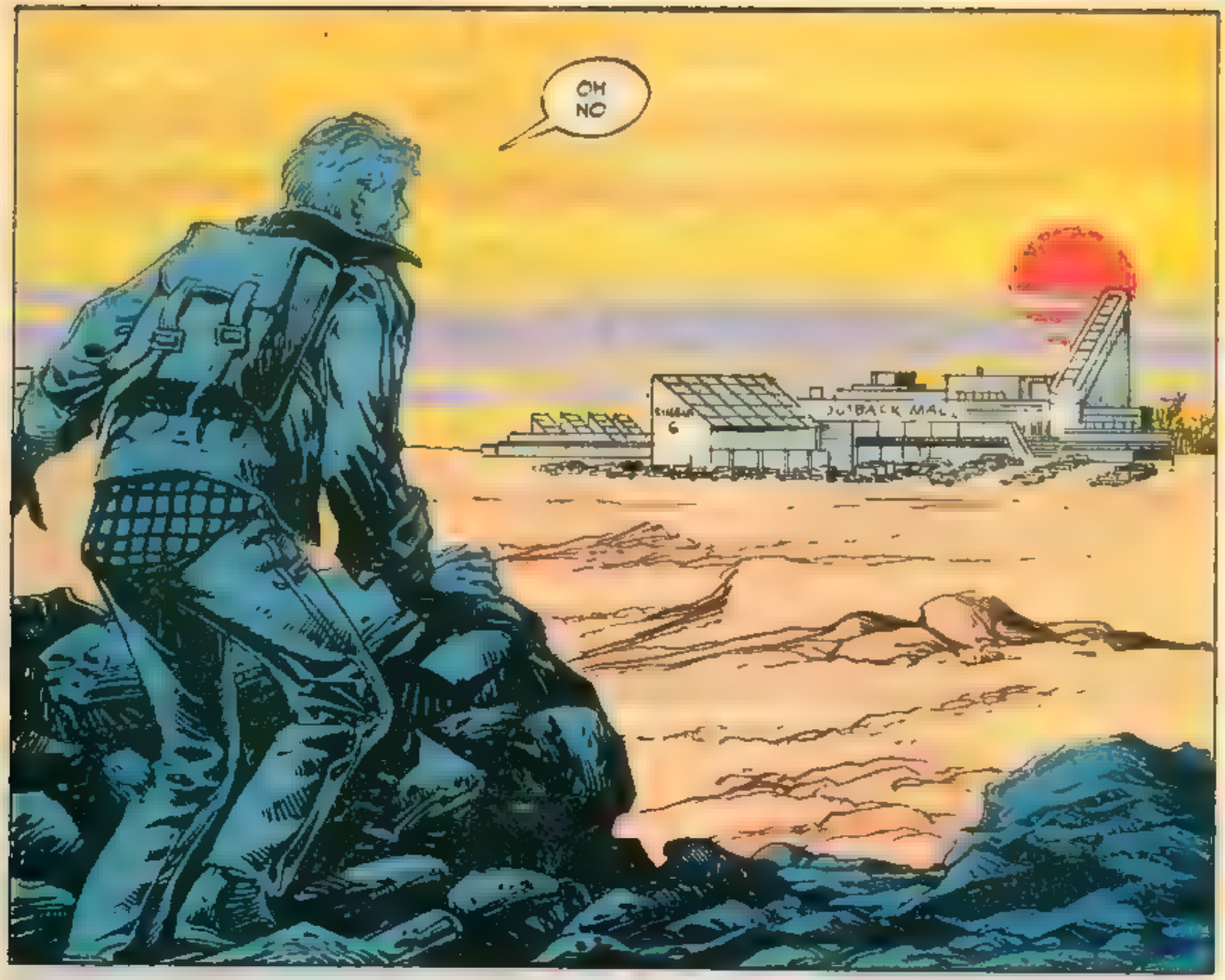
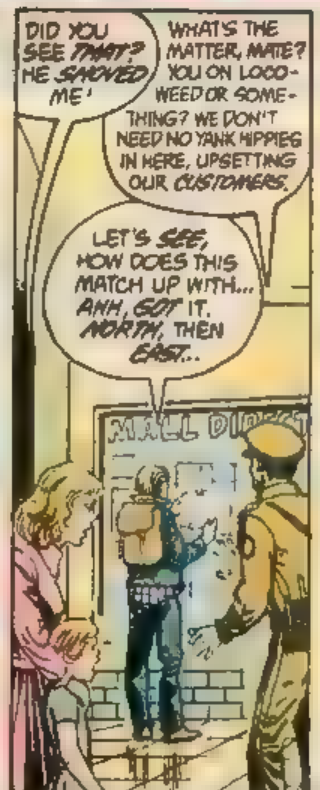

:MMF:
OKAY, SWEETHEART... NOT MUCH LONGER NOW I'M .:UHHK:.. I'M ALMOST...
...THERE



HUH? SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, MATE? A LOT OF MALLS LIKE THIS WEREN'T HERE THREE YEARS BACK.
I MEAN, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, SPORT? IT'S NOT LIKE SOMEWHERE OUT OF THIS WORLD.
HEY!
OH GOD, I ONLY HAVE EIGHT MINUTES.


DID YOU SEE THAT? HE SHOVED ME!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MATE? YOU ON LOCO-WEED OR SOMETHING? WE DON'T NEED NO YANK HIPPIES IN HERE, UPSETTING OUR CUSTOMERS.
LET'S SEE, HOW DOES THIS MATCH UP WITH... AHH, GOT IT. NORTH, THEN EAST..
MALL DI

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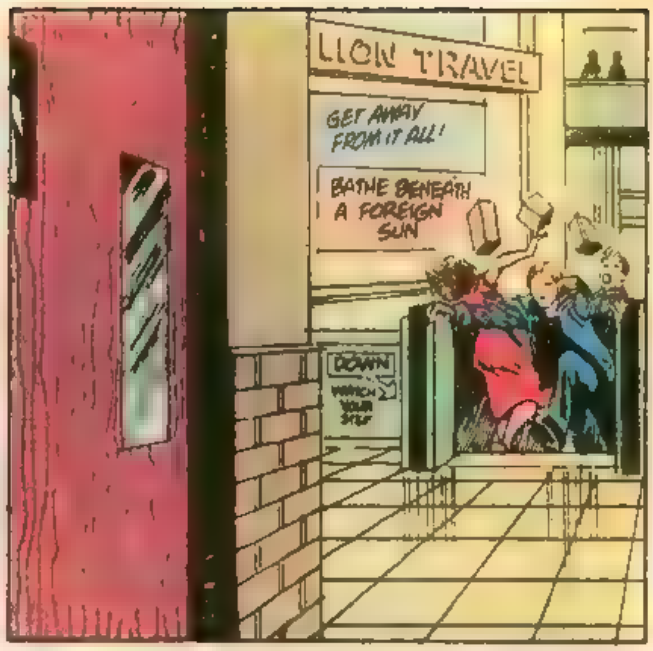
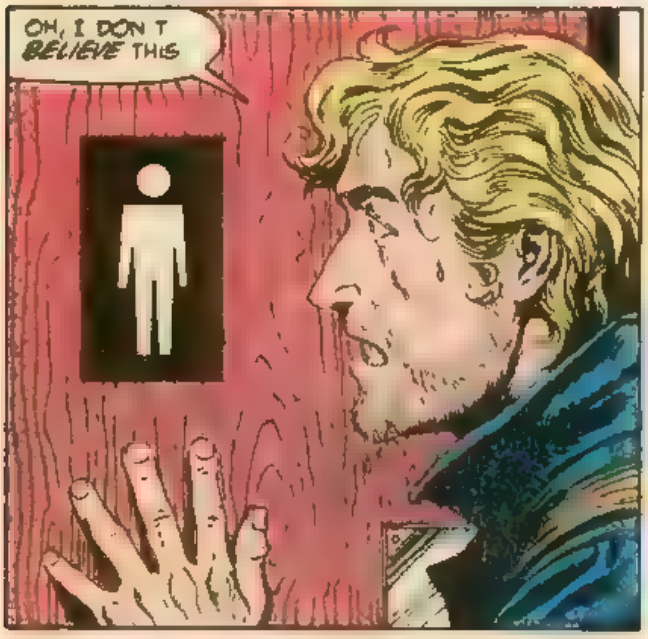
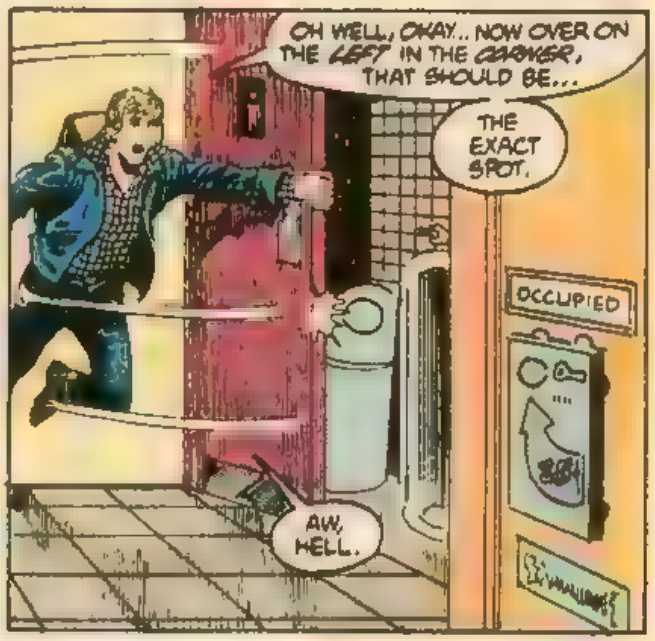
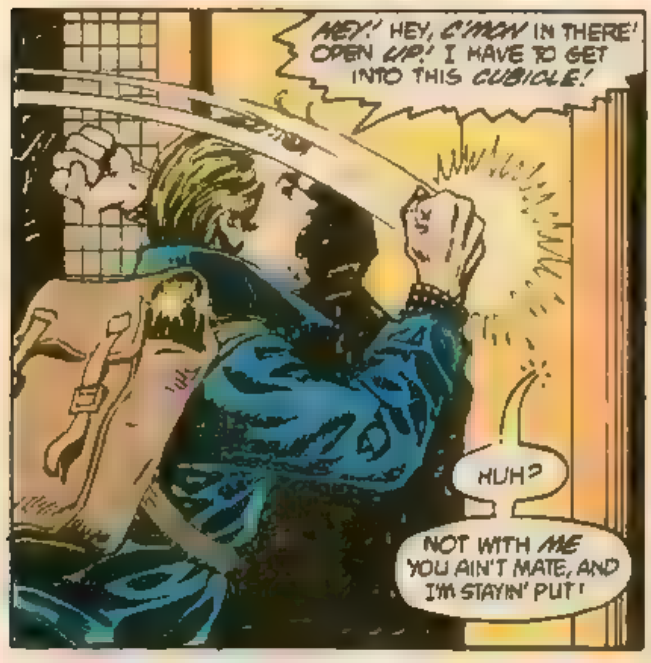
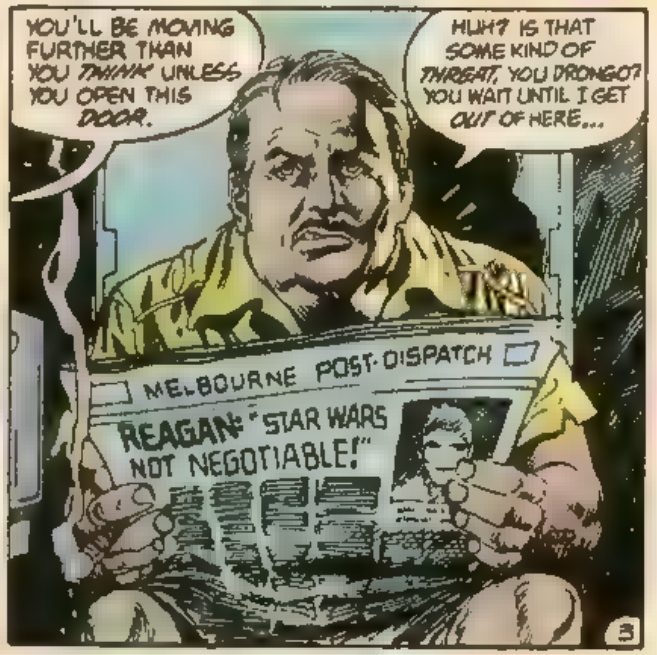

LION TRAVEL
GET AWAY FROM IT ALL!
BATHE BENEATH A FOREIGN SUN
DOWN

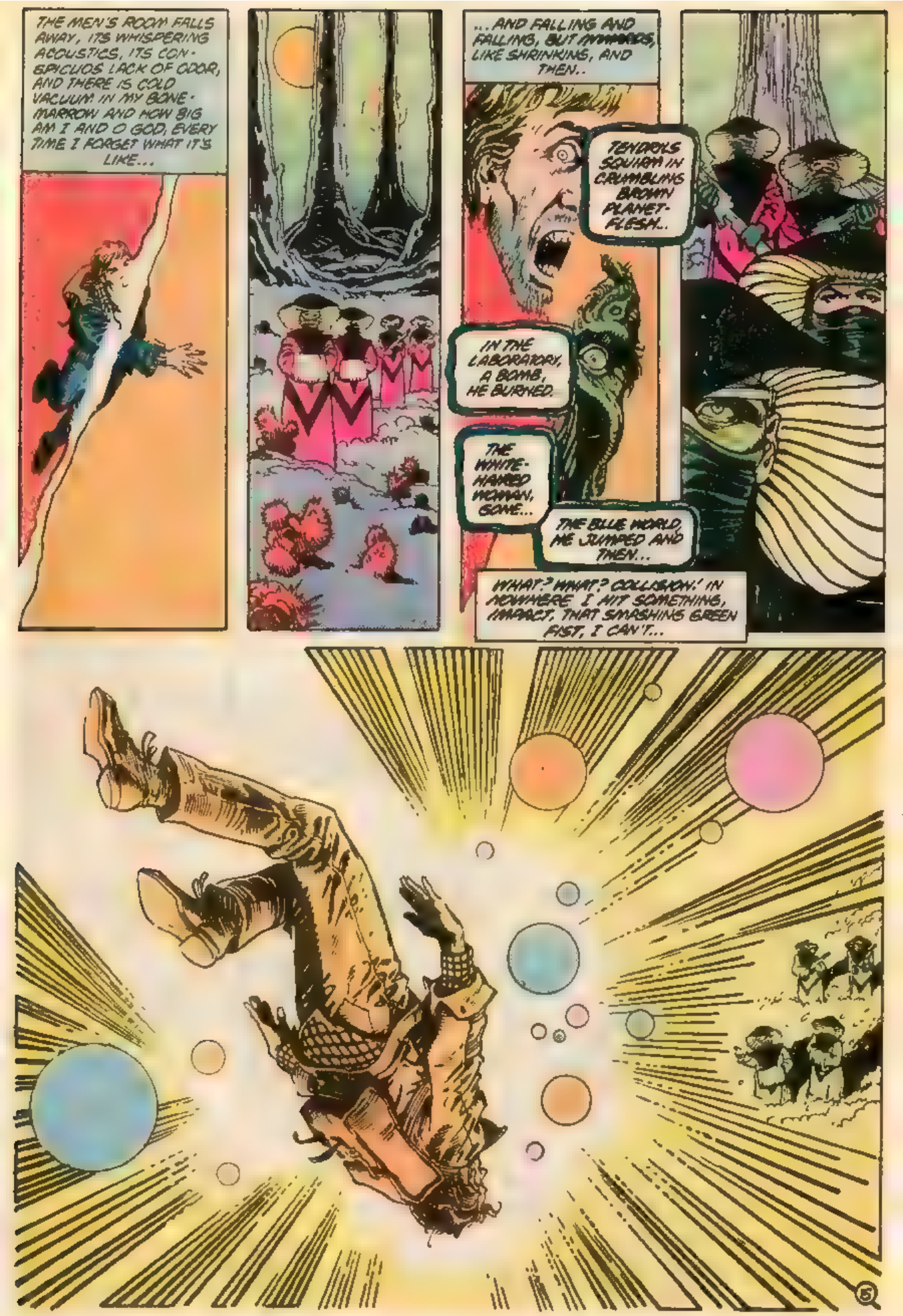

OH, I DON'T BELIEVE THIS


OH WELL, OKAY.. NOW OVER ON THE LEFT IN THE CORNER, THAT SHOULD BE...
THE EXACT SPOT.
OCCUPIED
AW, HELL.


HEY! HEY, C'MON IN THERE! OPEN UP! I HAVE TO GET INTO THIS CUBICLE!
HUH?
NOT WITH ME YOU AIN'T MATE, AND I'M STAYIN' PUT!


YOU'LL BE MOVING FURTHER THAN YOU THINK UNLESS YOU OPEN THIS DOOR.
HUH? IS THAT SOME KIND OF THREAT, YOU DRONGO? YOU WAIT UNTIL I GET OUT OF HERE...
MELBOURNE POST-DISPATCH
REAGAN: "STAR WARS NOT NEGOTIABLE!"
3

I CAN'T..
STREWTH WHAT THE BLUE..
WHUHH!
I'M SORRY, FRIEND
BUT MY NEED IS GREATER THAN THINE
AAAK!
THAT BLOODY TEARS IT, WHEN A BLOKE CAN'T GET A QUIET PONDER ON THE PORCELAIN
YOU BLEEDIN' PEROXIDE POOFTAH, I'M GOING TO BOOT YOUR ARSE STRAIGHT INTO BLOODY
...ORBIT...
HUH?
WHERE..?
..G'DAY?
4

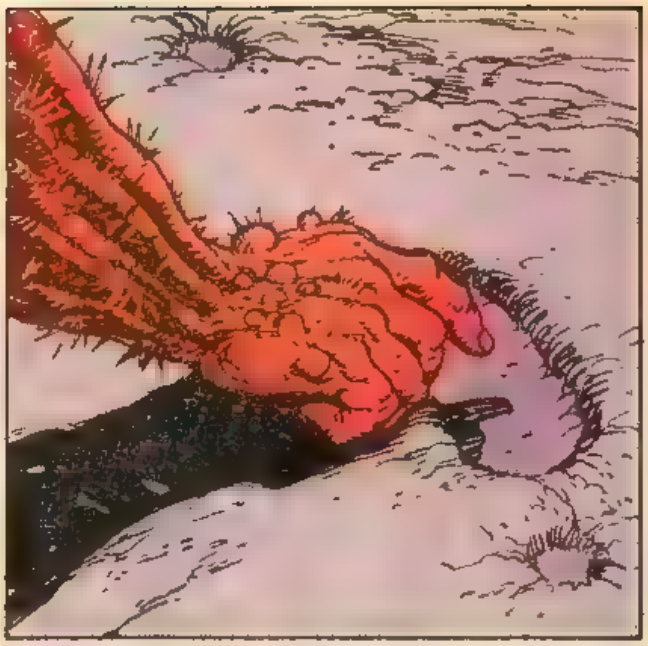

THE MEN'S ROOM FALLS AWAY, ITS WHISPERING ACOUSTICS, ITS CONSPICUOS LACK OF ODOR, AND THERE IS COLD VACUUM IN MY BONE-MARROW AND HOW BIG AM I AND O GOD, EVERY TIME I FORGET WHAT IT'S LIKE...
...AND FALLING AND FALLING, BUT INWARDS, LIKE SHRINKING, AND THEN..
TENDRILS SQUIRM IN CRUMBLING BROWN PLANET-FLESH..
IN THE LABORATORY, A BOMB, HE BURNED.
THE WHITE-HAIRED WOMAN, GONE...
THE BLUE WORLD, ME JUMPED AND THEN...
WHAT? WHAT? COLLISION! IN NOWHERE I HIT SOMETHING, IMPACT, THAT SMASHING GREEN FIST, I CAN'T...

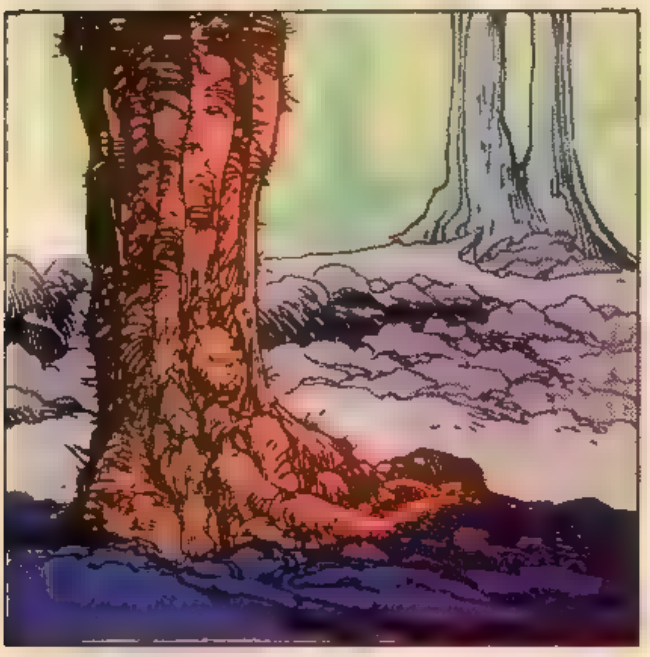
CREATED BY
KLEIN & WRIGHTSON

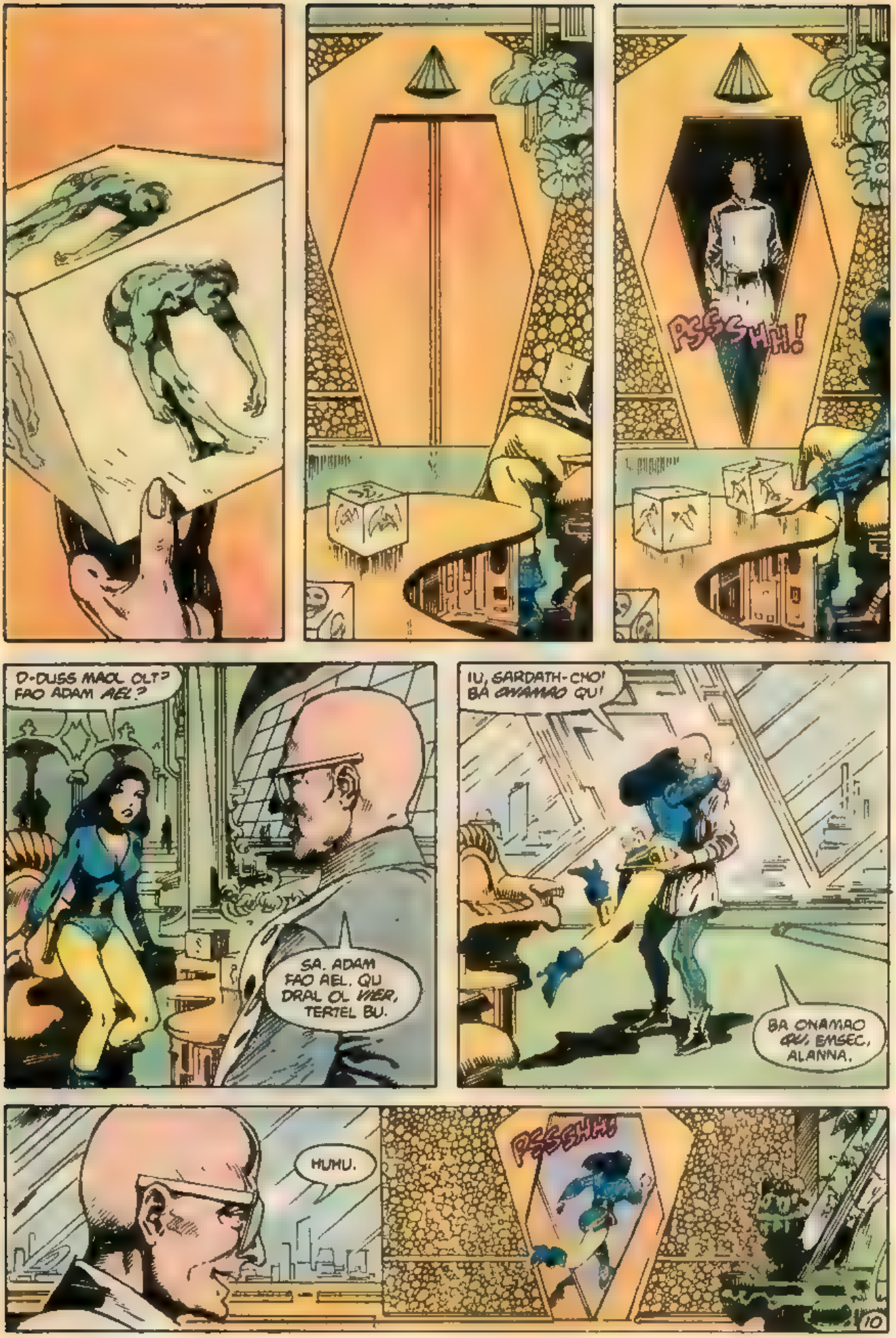
ALAN MOORE . RICK VEITCH & ALFREDO ALCALA . KAREN BERGER . ADRIENNE ROY . JOHN COSTANZA
writer | Artists | Editor | Guest Colorist | Letterer

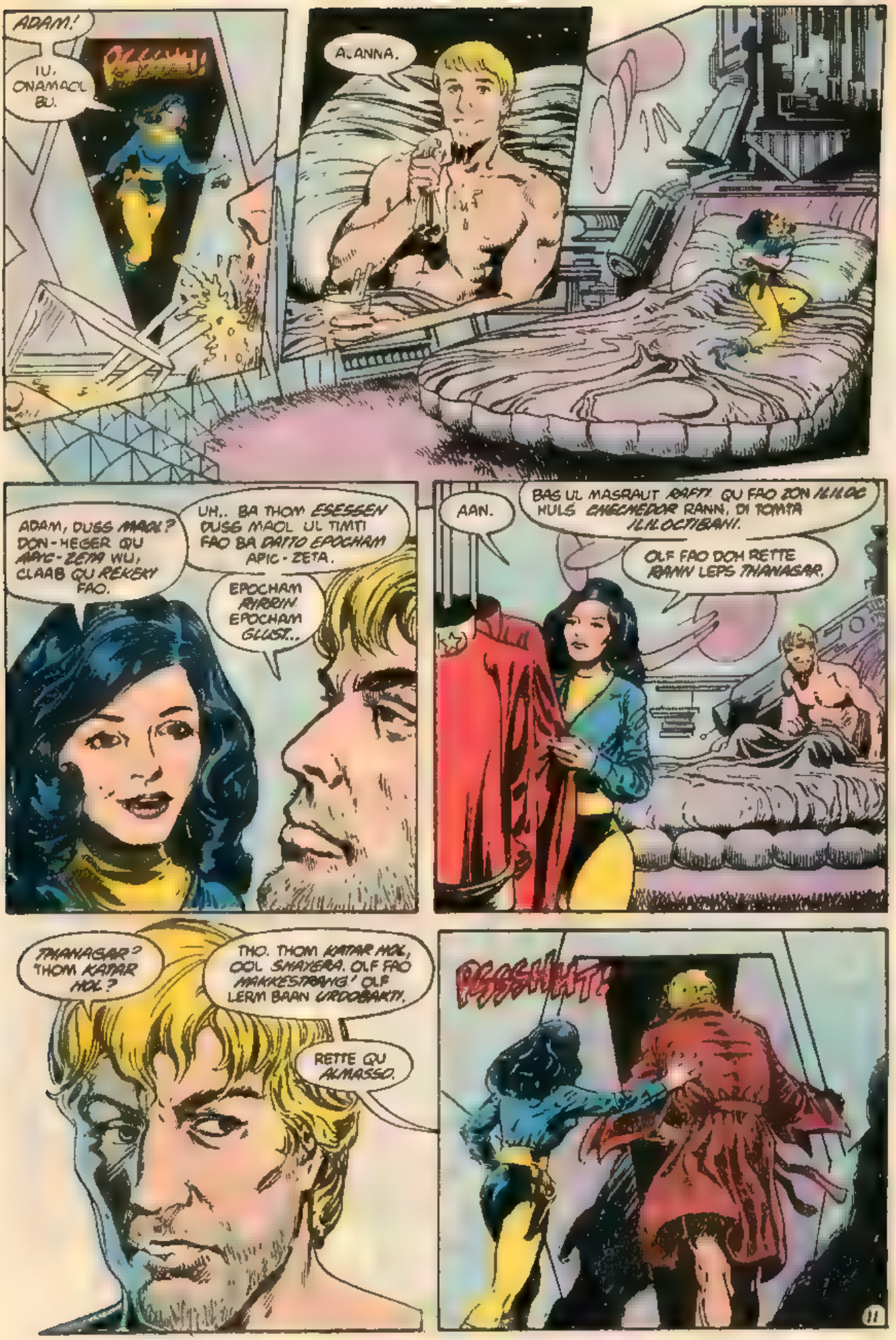
ADAM?
ADAM ILILOC BA'
MASMAT' OBSO QU.. BAAN GLISPIN DOH-HEGER BAS DRAAT OL HEGER RANAGAR
BAS OBSI, SARDATH-CHAT.
TERTEL BU? DUSS MOAL OL?
O OL DHUMER, CLAAB OL REKEK! FAC
FAOR APIC-ZETA FAOR HOORD OL?
BA THOM ESESSU. APIC-ZETA THO FAOR BREMEL OL HOORD, CLAAB.
FZZZT
GREEN SPLASHED THROUGH IT .. DEEP GREEN.
SARDATH-CHO! OL ILILOC! OL ILILOC INGLISH! FAO OL ..?
THO, REKEK FAC MEER. UNSA RANAGARY MEMEP FAO FAOR ALDRAAN OL.
VIER! GLISPIN OCH RETTE'
IU ADAM.
... COLD WET.
BAS GLISPIN HEGE, SARDATH-CHAT.
AEL' WOA. BAS OL GLAY AMYOR
I HIT IT.
FAO THOM HOORD OL
IU SARDATH-CHO FAORI OL AEL-FAC?
SASSU, ALANNA
SASSU
GRUSP
7

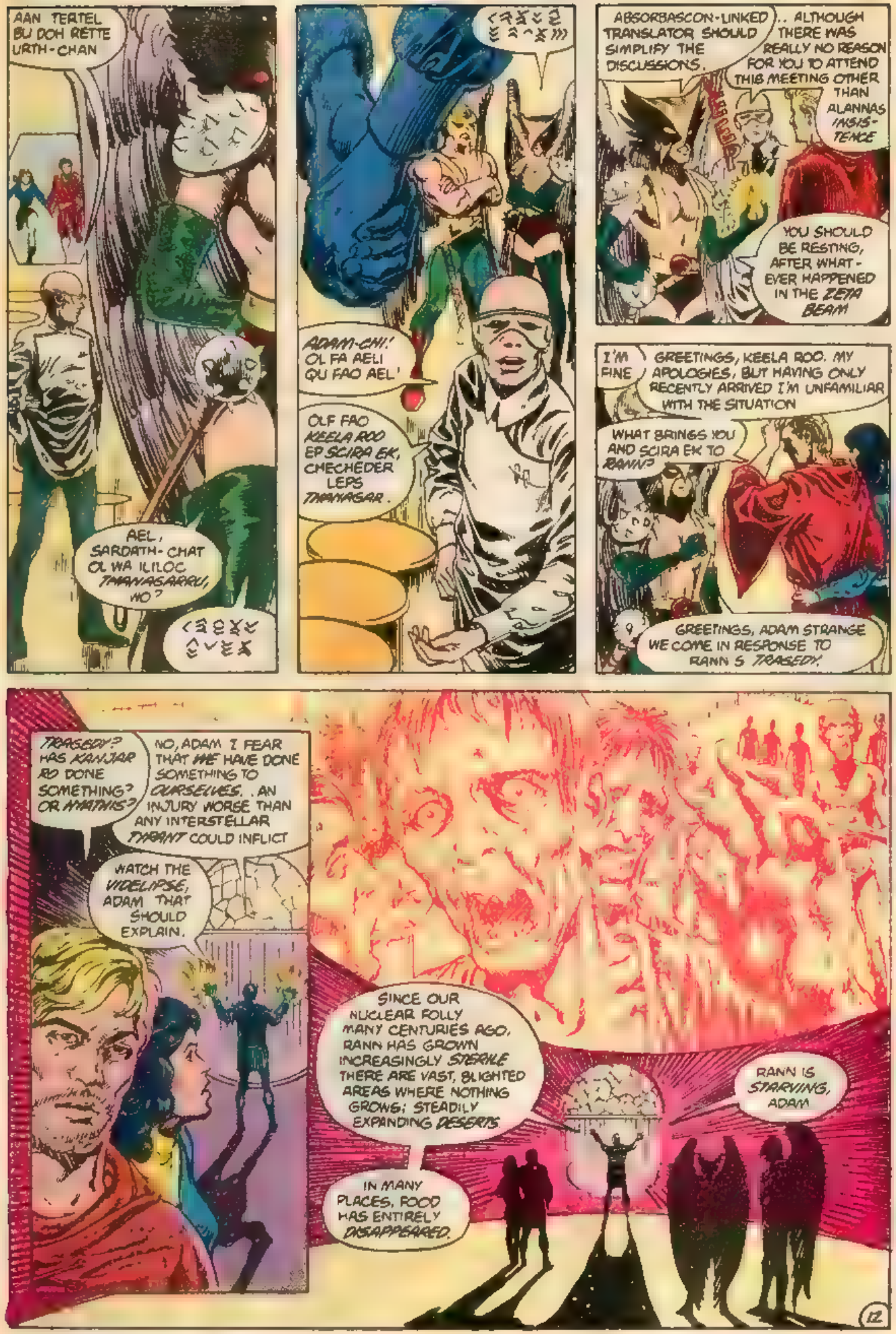
SPLSH
THLUCK
NWORP
GLECK
NORTHWEST
OUTFITTERS
SEATTLE WASH
MADE IN U.S.A.
SEATTLE.. ?

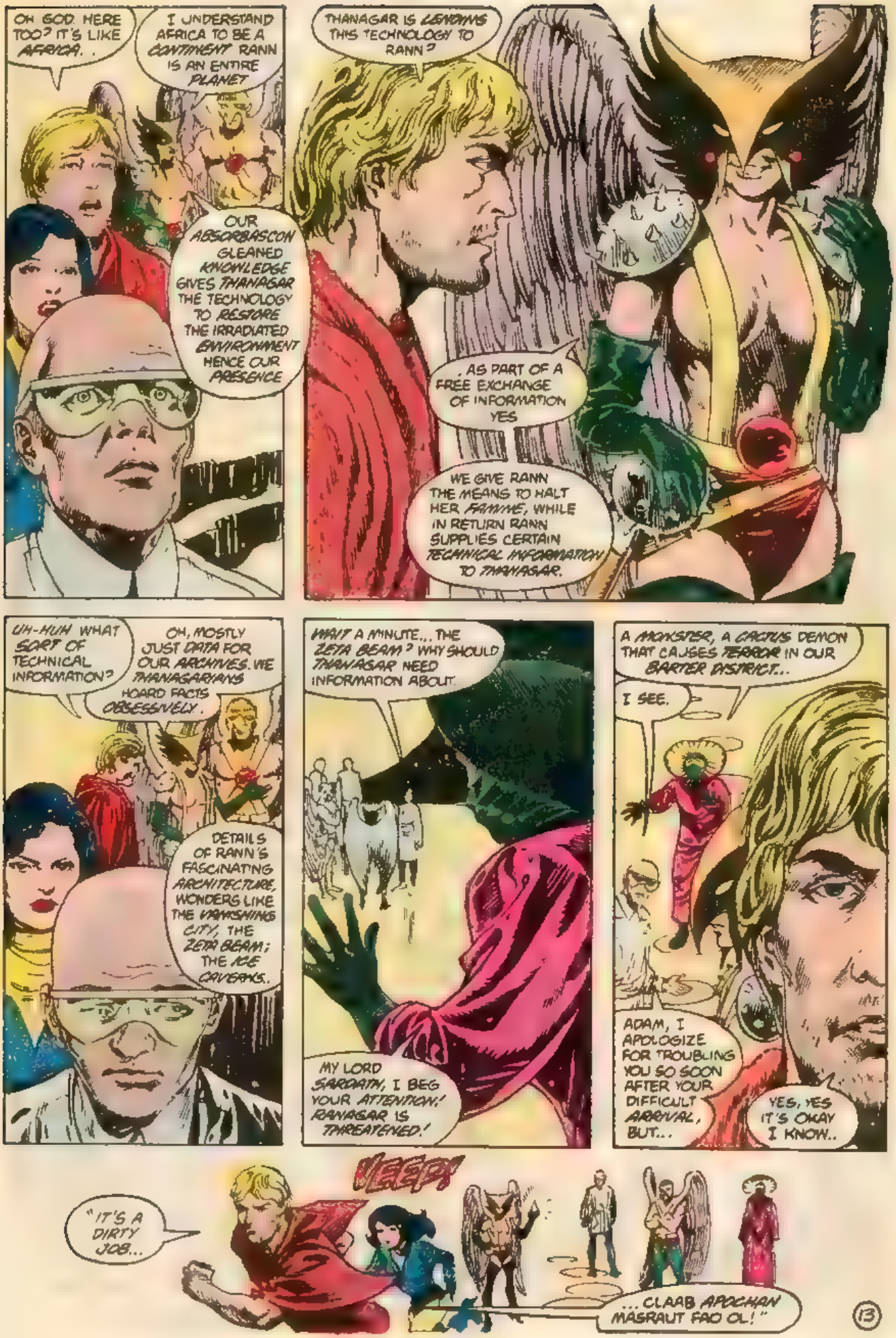


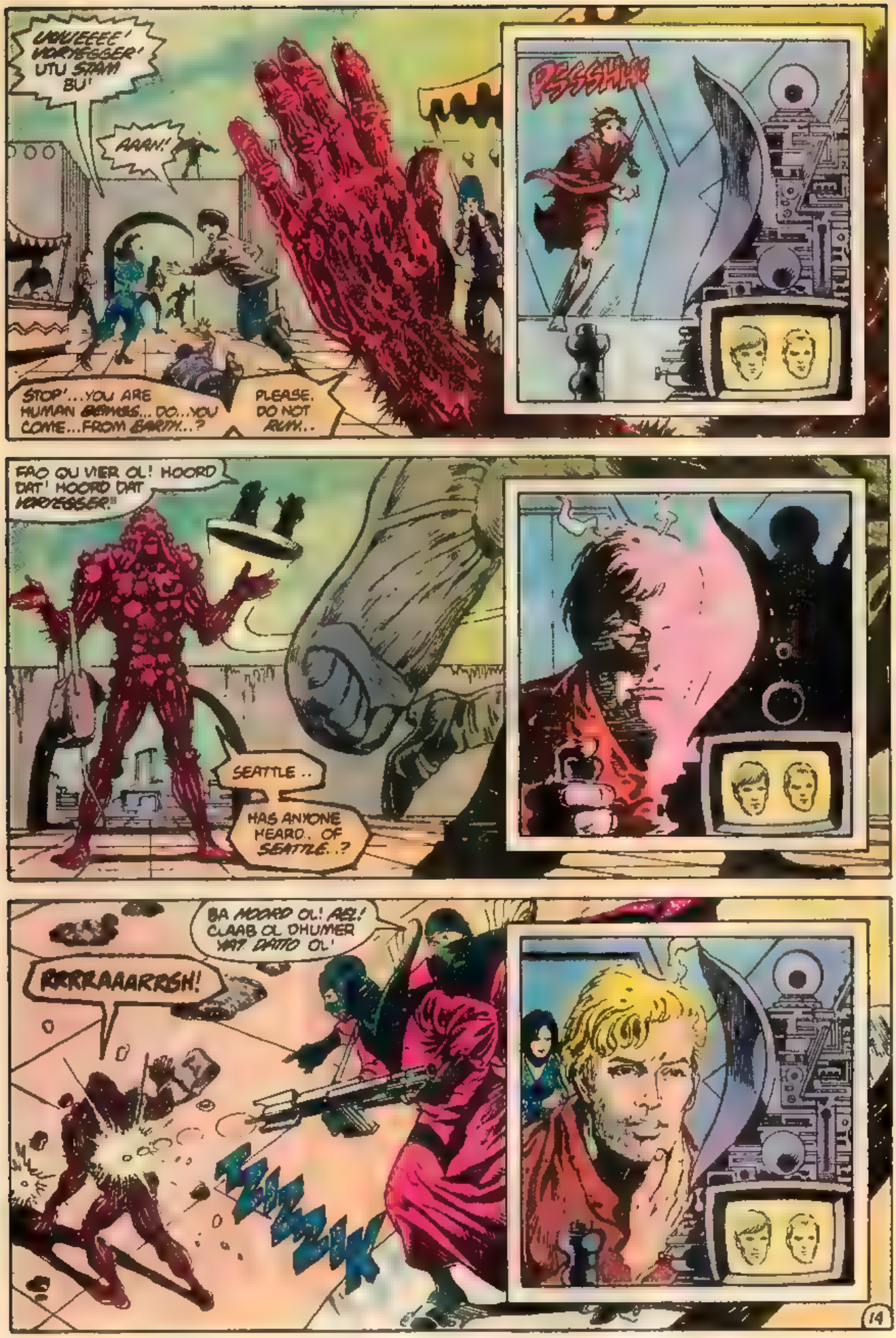


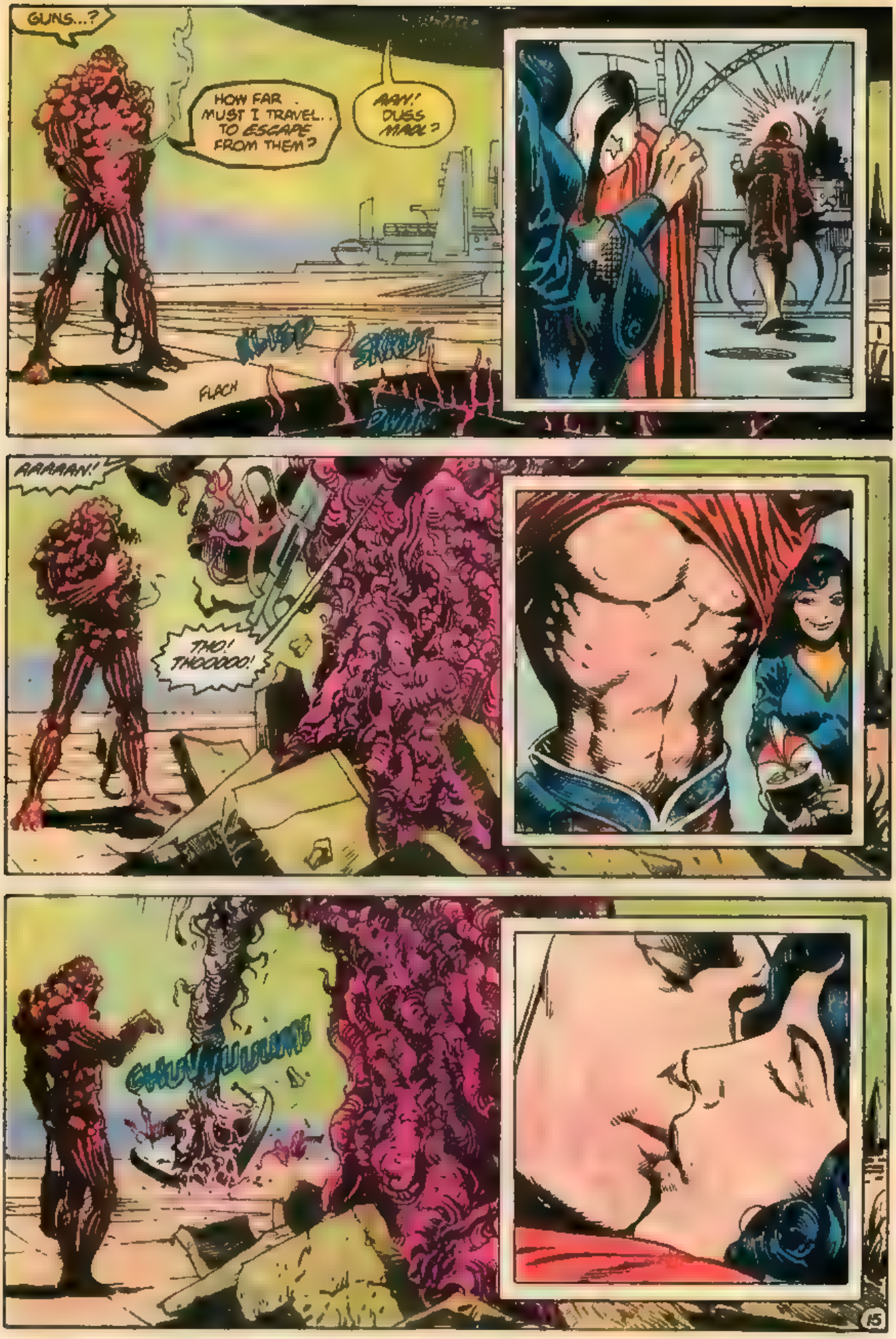

PSSSHH!
O-DUSS MAOL OLT? FAO ADAM AEL?
SA. ADAM FAO AEL. QU DRAL OL VIER, TERTEL BU.
IU, SARDATH-CHO! BA ONAMAO QU!
BA ONAMAO QU, EMSEC, ALANNA.
HUMU.
PSSSHH!
10

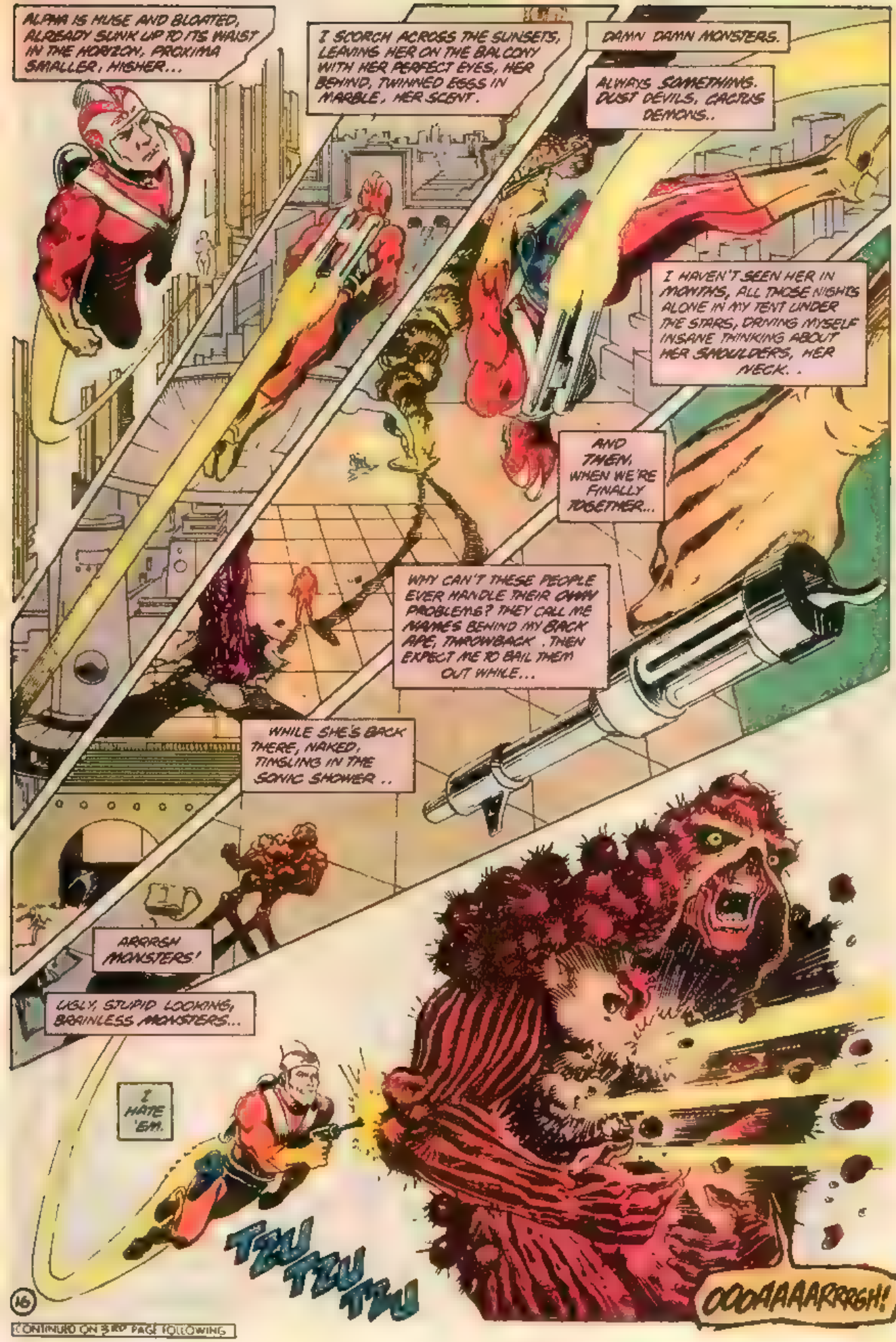

ADAM!
IU. ONAMACL BU.
ALANNA.
ADAM, DUSS MAOL? DON-HEGER QU AAYC-ZETA WU, CLAAB QU REKEK! FAO.
UH.. BA THOM ESESSEN DUSS MAOL UL TIMTI FAO BA DAITO EPOCHAM APIC-ZETA.
EPOCHAM AYRRIN. EPOCHAM GLUST..
AAN.
BAS UL MASRAUT RAFT! QU FAO ZON ILILOC HULS CHECMEDOR RANN, DI TOMTA ILILOCTIBAN!.
OLF FAO DOH RETTE RANN LEPS THANASAR.
THANASAR? THOM KATAR MOL?
THO. THOM KATAR MOL, OOL SHAYERA. OLF FAO MAAKESTRANG! OLF LERM BAAN URDOBAKTI.
RETTE QU ALMASSO.
PSSSHHT!
11


AAN TERTEL BU DOH RETTE URTH-CHAN
AEL, SARDATH-CHAT OL WA ILILOC THANASARRU, NO?
ADAM-CHI! OL FA AELI QU FAO AEL'
OLF FAO KEELA ROO EP SCIRA EK, CHECHEDER LEPS THANAGAR.
ABSORBASCON-LINKED TRANSLATOR SHOULD SIMPLIFY THE DISCUSSIONS.
.. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS REALLY NO REASON FOR YOU TO ATTEND THIS MEETING OTHER THAN ALANNAS INSISTENCE
YOU SHOULD BE RESTING, AFTER WHATEVER HAPPENED IN THE ZETA BEAM
I'M FINE
GREETINGS, KEELA ROO. MY APOLOGIES, BUT HAVING ONLY RECENTLY ARRIVED I'M UNFAMILIAR WITH THE SITUATION
WHAT BRINGS YOU AND SCIRA EK TO RANN?
GREETINGS, ADAM STRANGE WE COME IN RESPONSE TO RANN'S TRAGEDY.
TRAGEDY? HAS KANJAR RO DONE SOMETHING? OR AMATHIS?
NO, ADAM I FEAR THAT WE HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO OURSELVES. . AN INJURY WORSE THAN ANY INTERSTELLAR TYRANT COULD INFLICT
WATCH THE VIDELIPSE, ADAM THAT SHOULD EXPLAIN.
SINCE OUR NUCLEAR FOLLY MANY CENTURIES AGO, RANN HAS GROWN INCREASINGLY STERILE THERE ARE VAST, BLIGHTED AREAS WHERE NOTHING GROWS; STEADILY EXPANDING DESERTS
IN MANY PLACES, FOOD HAS ENTIRELY DISAPPEARED.
RANN IS STARVING, ADAM
12


OH GOD HERE TOO? IT'S LIKE AFRICA..
I UNDERSTAND AFRICA TO BE A CONTINENT RANN IS AN ENTIRE PLANET
OUR ABSORBASCON GLEANED KNOWLEDGE GIVES THANAGAR THE TECHNOLOGY TO RESTORE THE IRRADIATED ENVIRONMENT HENCE OUR PRESENCE
THANAGAR IS LENDING THIS TECHNOLOGY TO RANN?
..AS PART OF A FREE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION YES
WE GIVE RANN THE MEANS TO HALT HER FAMINE, WHILE IN RETURN RANN SUPPLIES CERTAIN TECHNICAL INFORMATION TO THANAGAR.
UH-HUH WHAT SORT OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION?
OH, MOSTLY JUST DATA FOR OUR ARCHIVES. WE THANAGARIANS HOARD FACTS OBSESSIVELY.
DETAILS OF RANN'S FASCINATING ARCHITECTURE, WONDERS LIKE THE VANISHING CITY, THE ZETA BEAM; THE ICE CAVERNS.
WAIT A MINUTE.., THE ZETA BEAM? WHY SHOULD THANAGAR NEED INFORMATION ABOUT
MY LORD SARDATH, I BEG YOUR ATTENTION! RANAGAR IS THREATENED!
A MONSTER, A CACTUS DEMON THAT CAUSES TERROR IN OUR BARTER DISTRICT..
I SEE.
ADAM, I APOLOGIZE FOR TROUBLING YOU SO SOON AFTER YOUR DIFFICULT ARRIVAL, BUT...
YES, YES IT'S OKAY I KNOW..
"IT'S A DIRTY JOB...
VEEP!
... CLAAB APOCHAN MASRAUT FAO OL!"


UUUEEEE! VORYEGGER! UTU STAM BU!
AAAN!
STOP!...YOU ARE HUMAN BEINGS... DO...YOU COME...FROM EARTH...?
PLEASE. DO NOT RUN...
PSSSHH!
FAO QU VIER OL! HOORD DAT! HOORD DAT VORYEGGER!
SEATTLE..
HAS ANYONE HEARD.. OF SEATTLE..?
BA HOORD OL! AEL! CLAAB OL DHUMER YAT DATTO OL!
RRRRAAARRGH!


GUNS...?
HOW FAR MUST I TRAVEL.. TO ESCAPE FROM THEM?
AAN! DUSS MAOL?
FLACH
AAAAAN!
THO! THOOOOO!
GHUUUUUUM!


ALPHA IS HUGE AND BLOATED, ALREADY SUNK UP TO ITS WAIST IN THE HORIZON. PROXIMA SMALLER, HIGHER...
I SCORCH ACROSS THE SUNSETS, LEAVING HER ON THE BALCONY WITH HER PERFECT EYES, HER BEHIND, TWINNED EGGS IN MARBLE, HER SCENT.
DAMN DAMN MONSTERS.
ALWAYS SOMETHING. DUST DEVILS, CACTUS DEMONS..
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN MONTHS, ALL THOSE NIGHTS ALONE IN MY TENT UNDER THE STARS, DRIVING MYSELF INSANE THINKING ABOUT HER SHOULDERS, HER NECK. .
AND THEN, WHEN WE'RE FINALLY TOGETHER...
WHY CAN'T THESE PEOPLE EVER HANDLE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS? THEY CALL ME NAMES BEHIND MY BACK APE, THROWBACK . THEN EXPECT ME TO BAIL THEM OUT WHILE...
WHILE SHE'S BACK THERE, NAKED, TINGLING IN THE SONIC SHOWER ..
ARRRGH MONSTERS!
UGLY, STUPID LOOKING, BRAINLESS MONSTERS...
I HATE 'EM.
TZU TZU TZU
OOOAAAARRRGH!

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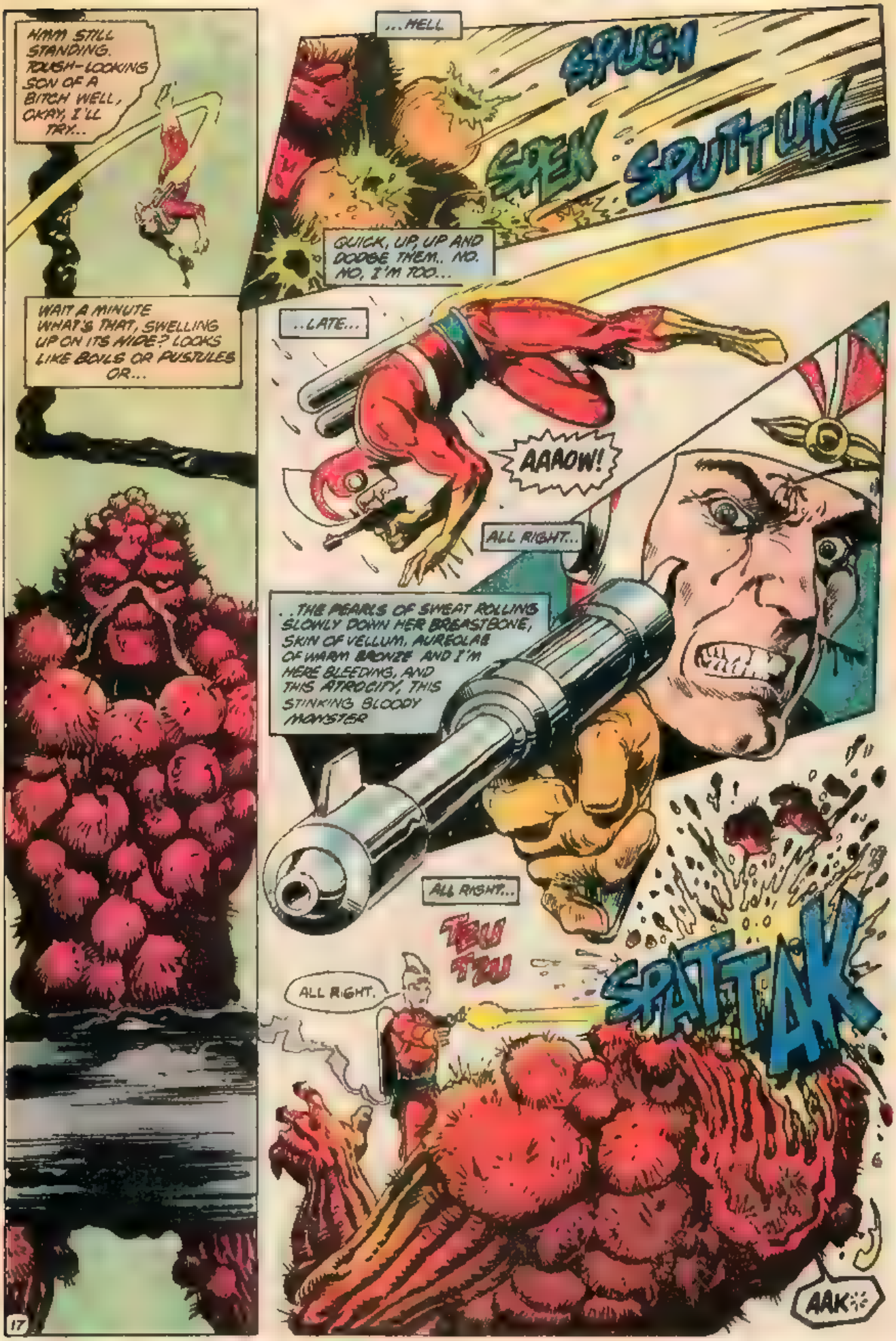
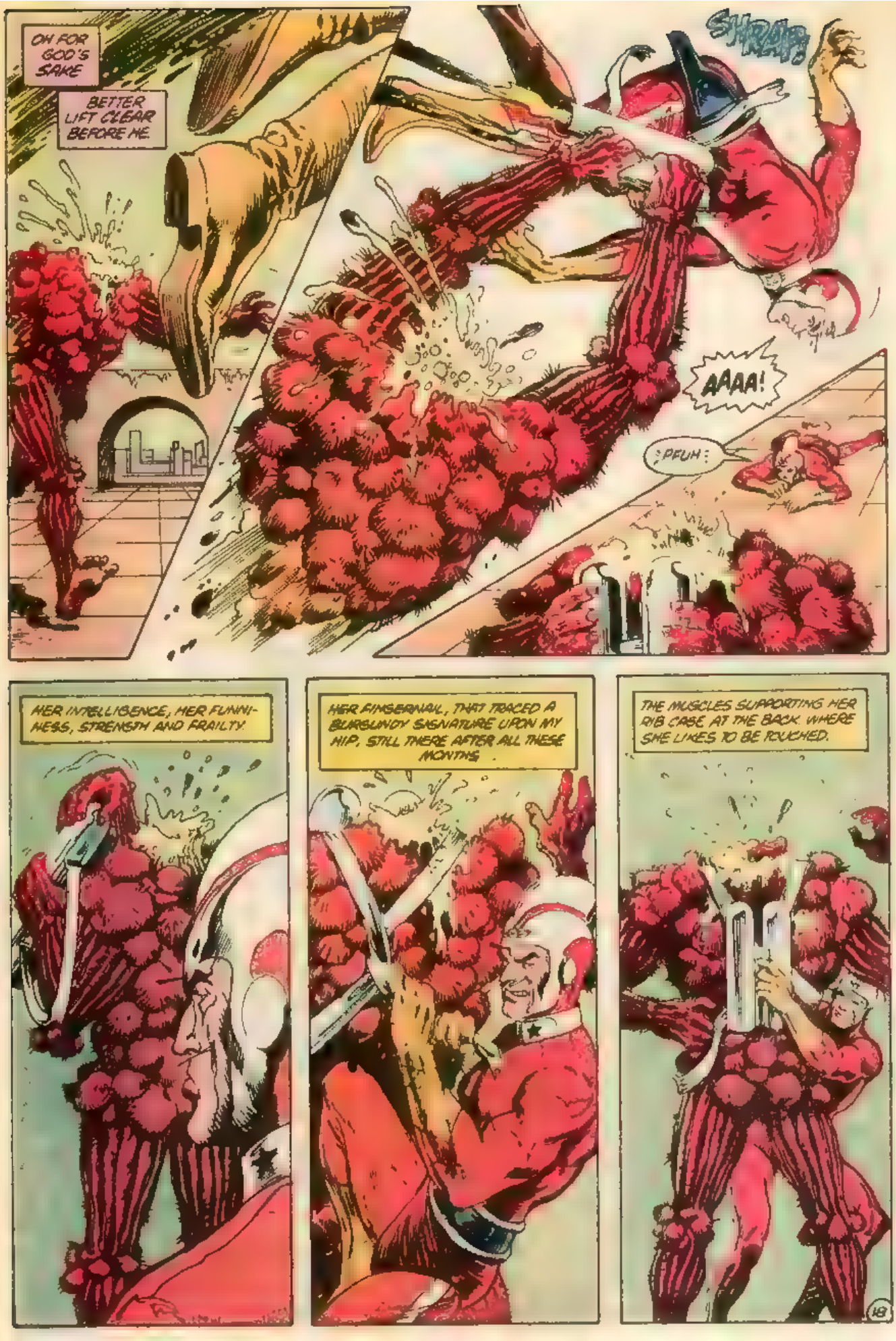
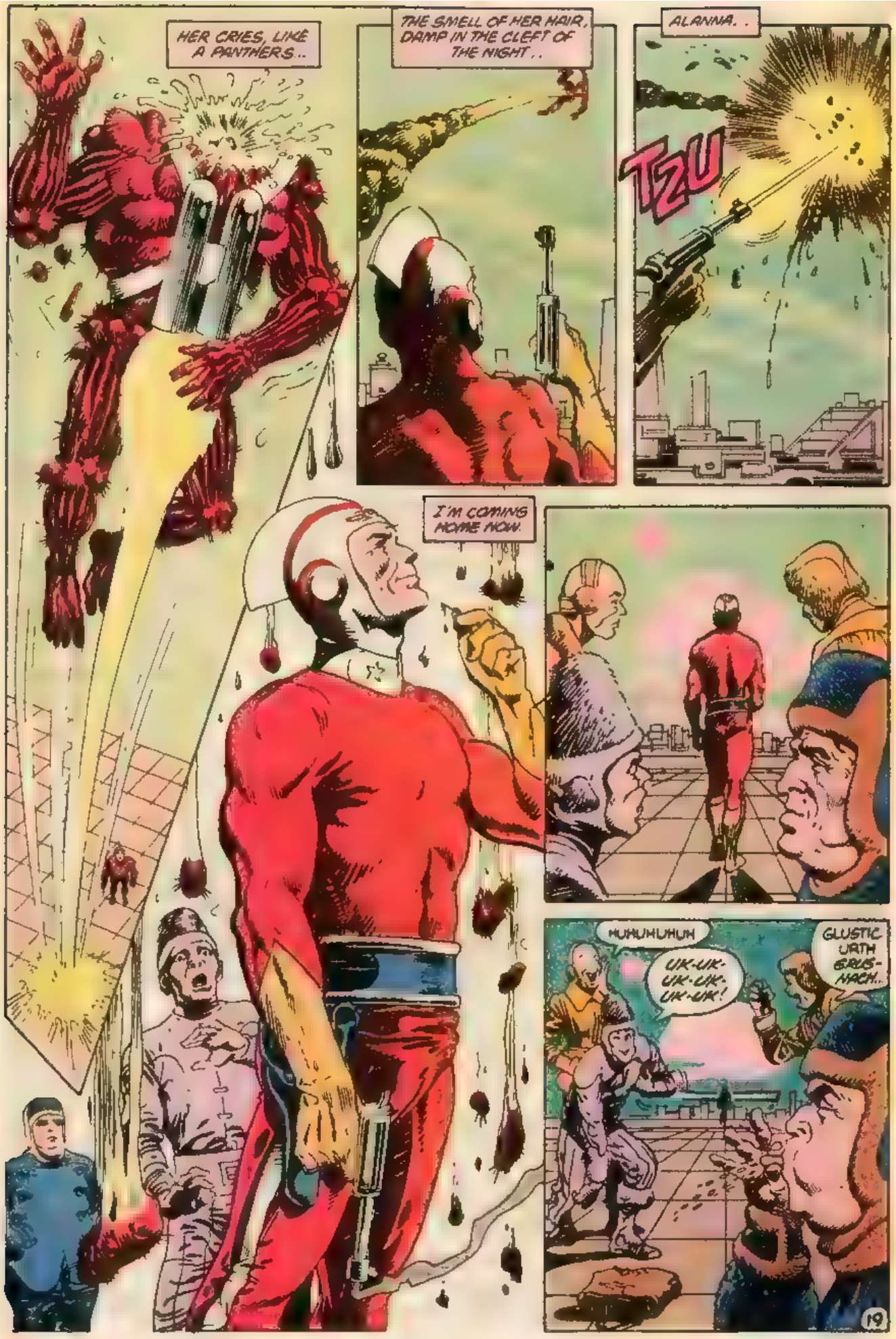
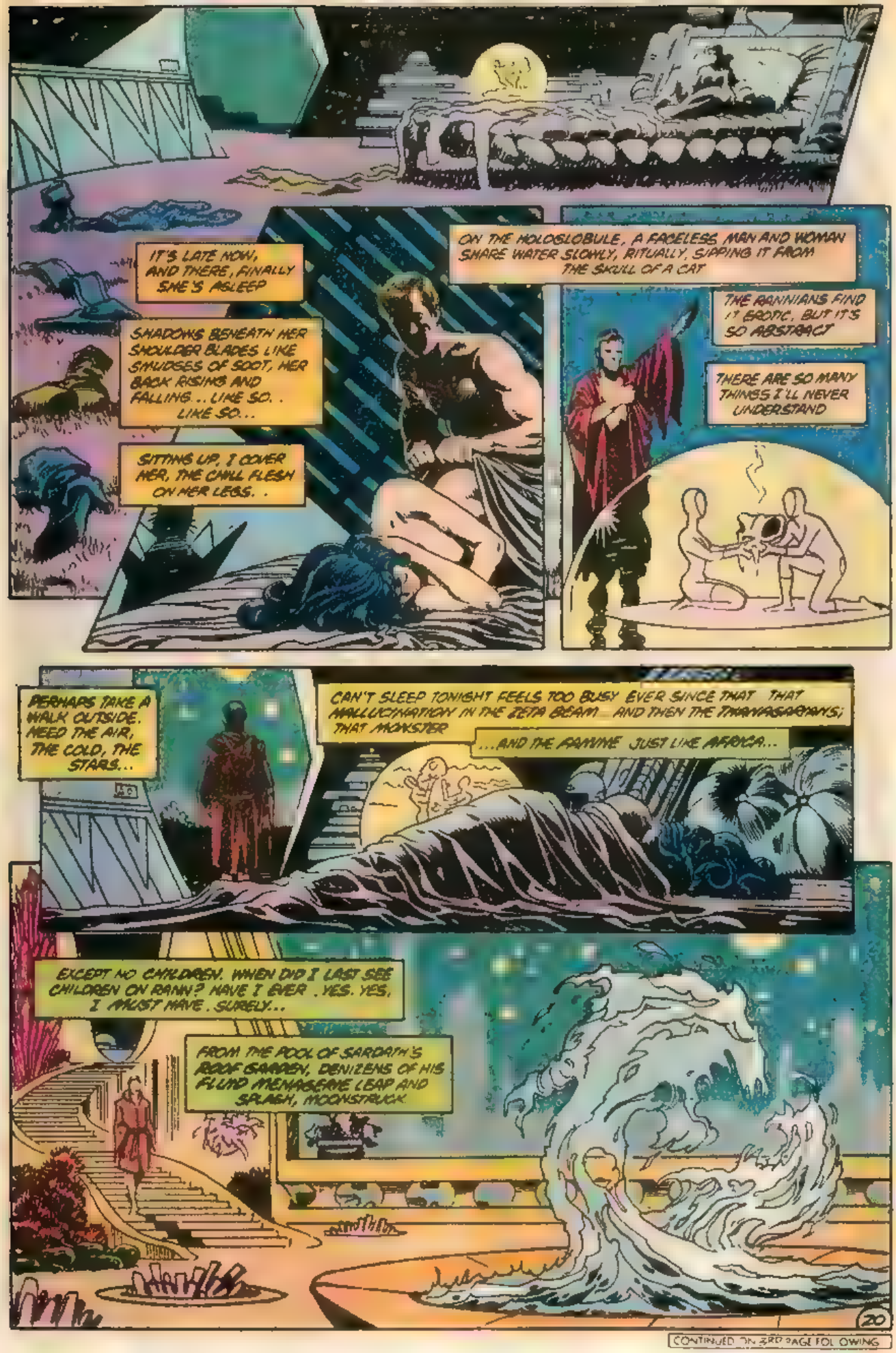

HMM STILL STANDING. TOUGH-LOOKING SON OF A BITCH WELL, OKAY, I'LL TRY...
WAIT A MINUTE WHAT'S THAT, SWELLING UP ON ITS SIDE? LOOKS LIKE BOILS OR PUSTULES OR...
...HELL
SPUCH
SPEK
SPUTTUK
QUICK, UP, UP AND DODGE THEM.. NO. NO, I'M TOO...
..LATE...
AAAOW!
ALL RIGHT...
..THE PEARLS OF SWEAT ROLLING SLOWLY DOWN HER BREASTBONE, SKIN OF VELLUM, AUREOLAE OF WARM BRONZE AND I'M HERE BLEEDING, AND THIS ATROCITY, THIS STINKING BLOODY MONSTER
ALL RIGHT...
TEW TEW
ALL RIGHT.
SPATTAK
AAK
17


OH FOR GOD'S SAKE
BETTER LIFT CLEAR BEFORE HE
SHRAK!
AAAA!
PFUH
HER INTELLIGENCE, HER FUNNINESS, STRENGTH AND FRAILTY.
HER FINGERNAIL, THAT TRACED A BURGUNDY SIGNATURE UPON MY HIP, STILL THERE AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS.
THE MUSCLES SUPPORTING HER RIB CAGE AT THE BACK. WHERE SHE LIKES TO BE TOUCHED.
18


HER CRIES, LIKE A PANTHERS..
THE SMELL OF HER HAIR, DAMP IN THE CLEFT OF THE NIGHT..
ALANNA..
TZU
I'M COMING HOME NOW.
MUHUHUHUH
UK-UK-UK-UK-UK-UK!
GLUSTIC URTH GRUS-NACH..
19


IT'S LATE NOW, AND THERE, FINALLY SHE'S ASLEEP
SHADOWS BENEATH HER SHOULDER BLADES LIKE SMUDGES OF SOOT, HER BACK RISING AND FALLING .. LIKE SO.. LIKE SO...
SITTING UP, I COVER HER, THE CHILL FLESH ON HER LEGS. .
ON THE HOLOSLOBULE, A FACELESS MAN AND WOMAN SHARE WATER SLOWLY, RITUALLY, SIPPING IT FROM THE SKULL OF A CAT
THE RANNIANS FIND IT EROTIC, BUT IT'S SO ABSTRACT
THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND
PERHAPS TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE. NEED THE AIR, THE COLD, THE STARS..
CAN'T SLEEP TONIGHT FEELS TOO BUSY EVER SINCE THAT THAT HALLUCINATION IN THE ZETA BEAM AND THEN THE THANYASAPIANS; THAT MONSTER
...AND THE FAMINE JUST LIKE AFRICA...
EXCEPT NO CHILDREN. WHEN DID I LAST SEE CHILDREN ON RANN? HAVE I EVER . YES. YES, I MUST HAVE . SURELY...
FROM THE POOL OF SARDATH'S ROOF GARDEN, DENIZENS OF HIS FLUID MENAGERIE LEAP AND SPLASH, MOONSTRUCK
20
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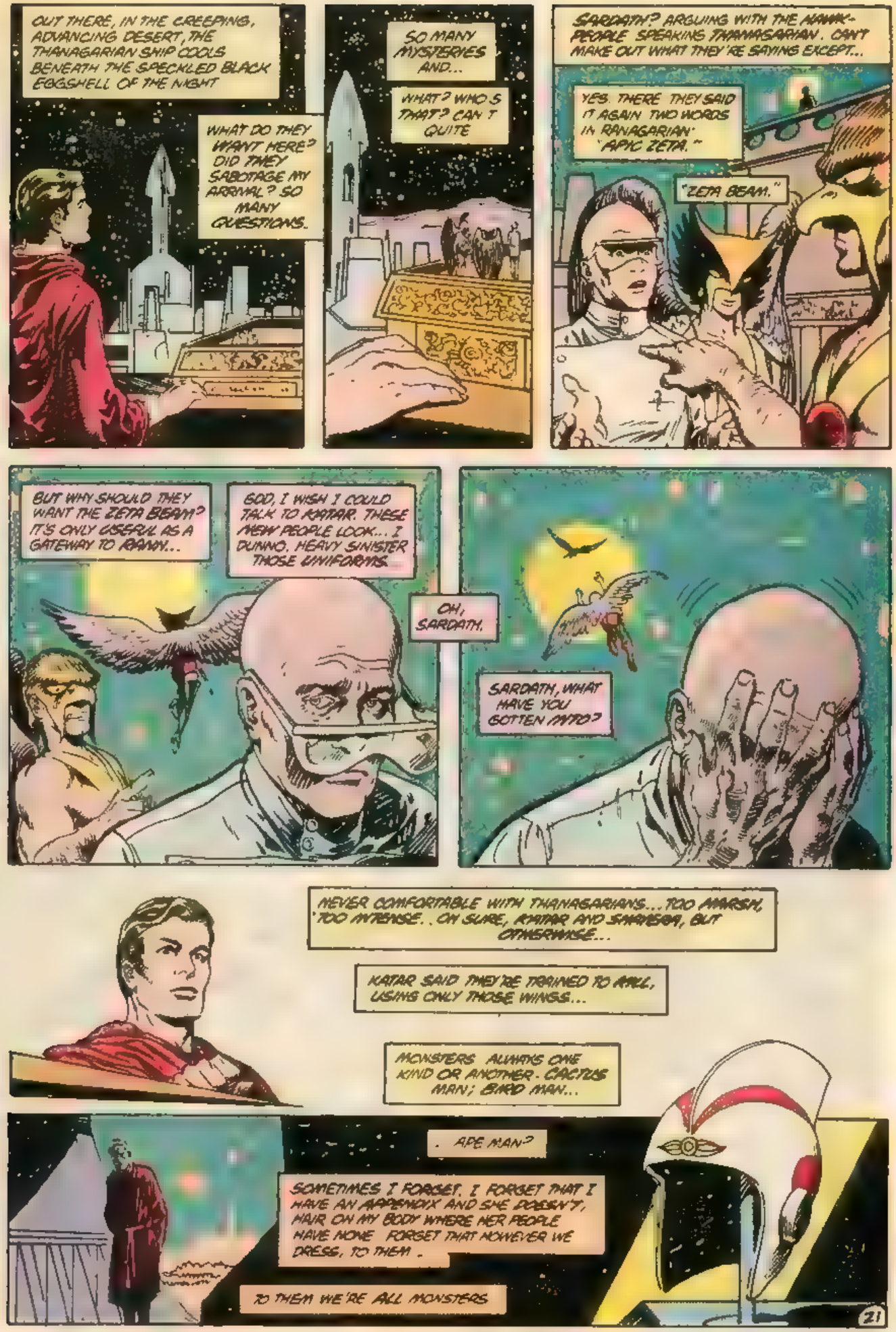
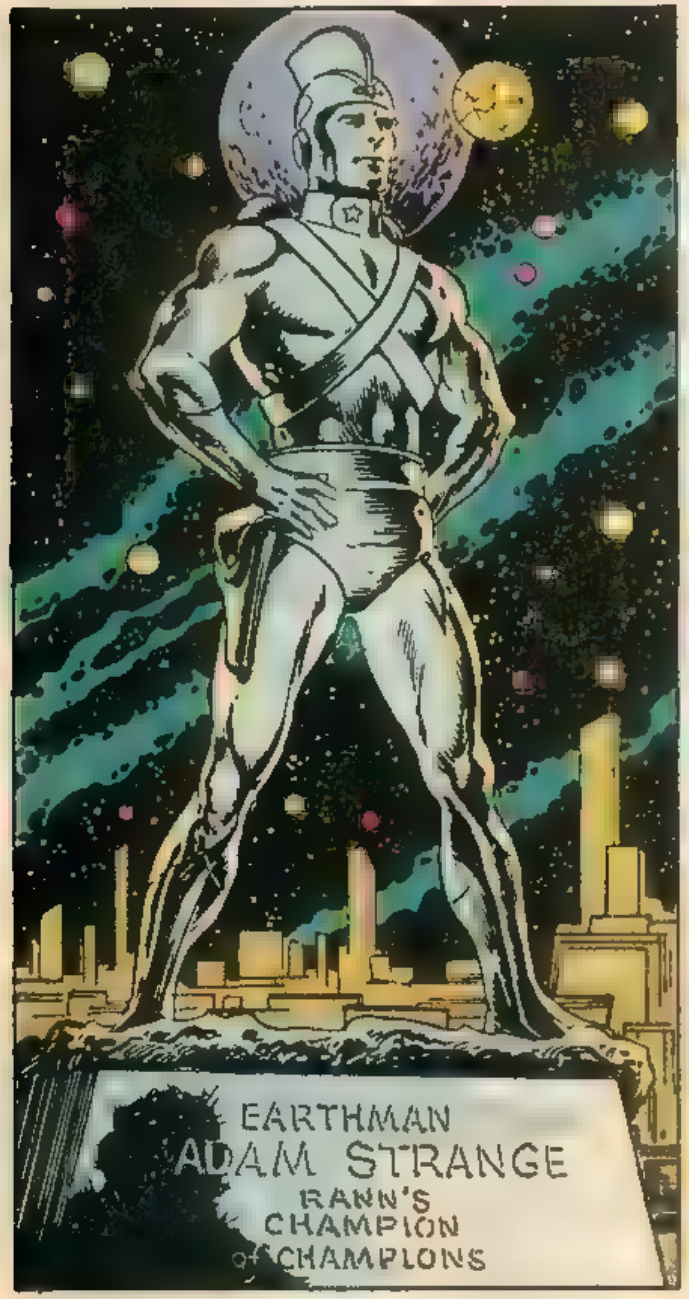

OUT THERE, IN THE CREEPING, ADVANCING DESERT, THE THANAGARIAN SHIP COOLS BENEATH THE SPECKLED BLACK EGGSHELL OF THE NIGHT
WHAT DO THEY WANT HERE? DID THEY SABOTAGE MY ARRIVAL? SO MANY QUESTIONS.
SO MANY MYSTERIES AND...
WHAT? WHO'S THAT? CAN'T QUITE
SARDATH? ARGUING WITH THE HAWK-PEOPLE SPEAKING THANAGARIAN. CAN'T MAKE OUT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING EXCEPT...
YES. THERE THEY SAID IT AGAIN TWO WORDS IN RANAGARIAN: "APIC ZETA."
"ZETA BEAM."
BUT WHY SHOULD THEY WANT THE ZETA BEAM? IT'S ONLY USEFUL AS A GATEWAY TO RANN...
GOD, I WISH I COULD TALK TO KATAR. THESE NEW PEOPLE LOOK... I DUNNO. HEAVY SINISTER THOSE UNIFORMS.
OH, SARDATH.
SARDATH, WHAT HAVE YOU GOTTEN INTO?
NEVER COMFORTABLE WITH THANAGARIANS... TOO AWARSH, TOO INTENSE. OH SURE, KATAR AND SHAYERA, BUT OTHERWISE...
KATAR SAID THEY'RE TRAINED TO KILL, USING ONLY THOSE WINGS...
MONSTERS. ALWAYS ONE KIND OR ANOTHER. CACTUS MAN; BIRD MAN...
. APE MAN?
SOMETIMES I FORGET. I FORGET THAT I HAVE AN APPENDIX AND SHE DOESN'T, HAIR ON MY BODY WHERE HER PEOPLE HAVE NONE. FORGET THAT NOMATTER WE DRESS, TO THEM.
TO THEM WE'RE ALL MONSTERS.
21

QUECH
SHELL
SKRUT
PLUTCH


EARTHMAN
ADAM STRANGE
RANN'S
CHAMPION
of CHAMPIONS

EARTH

SEATTLE
22

NEXT EXILES

DC
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by MOORE, VEITCH & ALCALA
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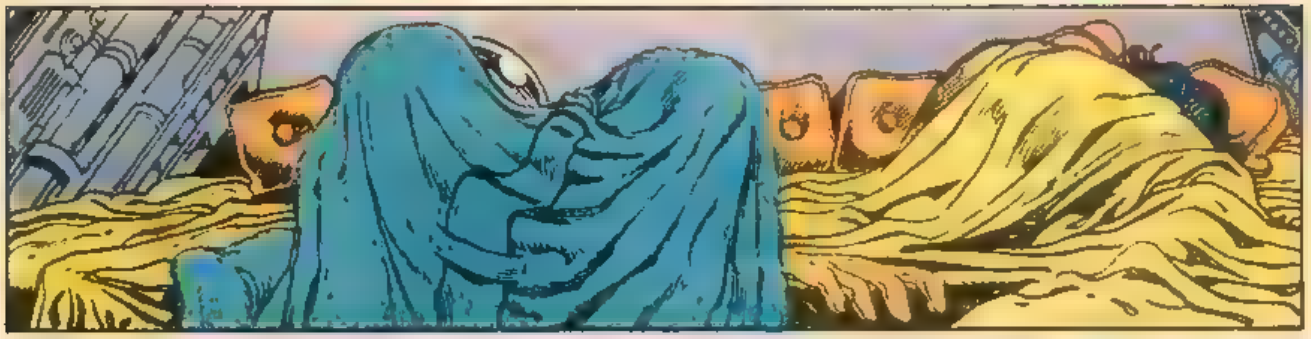

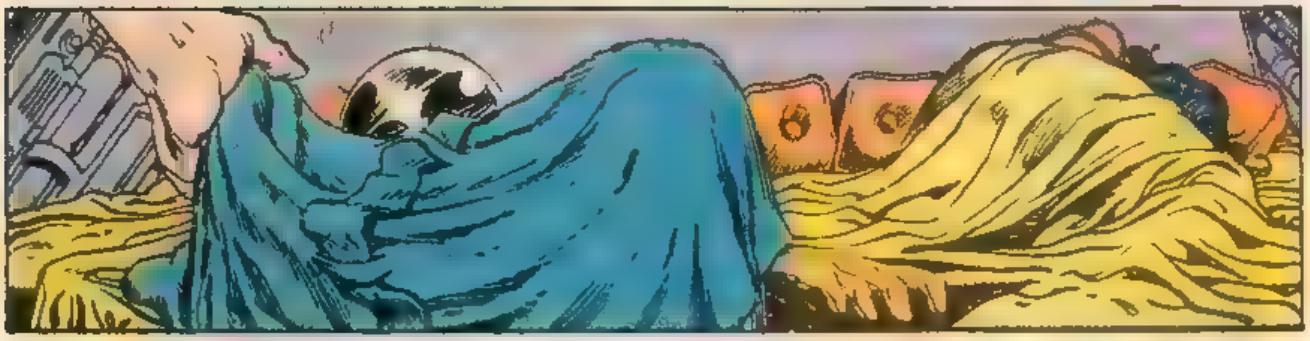

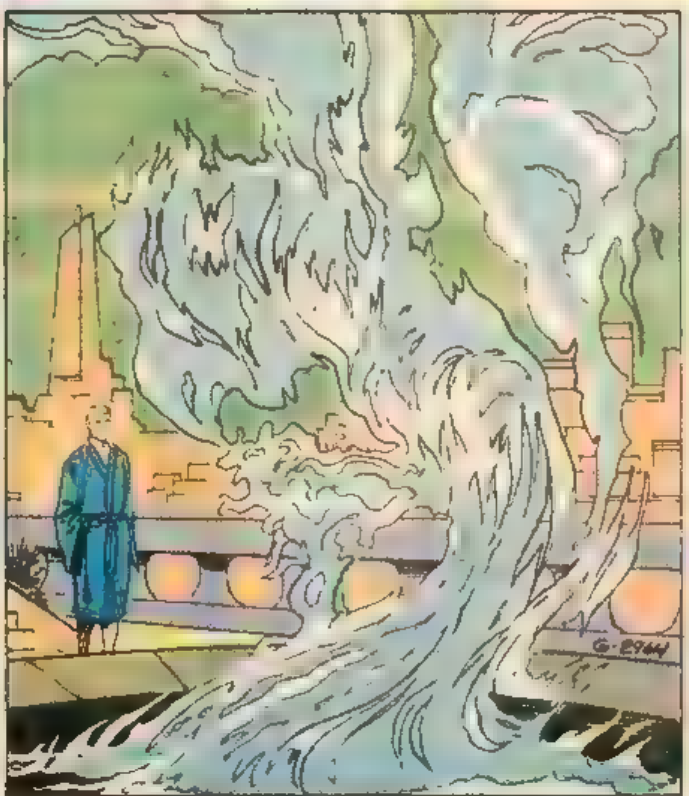

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LAM TALSA, KEELA ROO. QU GLISPI SARN.

LAM TALSA, ADAM STRANGE. BAS HAKKESTRANGE ETHMET GLISPI SARN.

TOMTEL QU ..

BA MURRN ILILOCTA-UNULACON BU...

SO THAT WE MAY TALK MORE EASILY DO YOU ALWAYS RISE SO EARLY TO WATCH SARDATH'S LIQUID ANIMALS AT PLAY? I FIND THEM A TRIVIAL AND INANE LIFE FORM.

ONLY WHEN THEY'RE AROUND SARDATH'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY. YOU SHOULD SEE THEM WHEN THEY'RE UPSET.

KEELA ROO, I NEVER GOT A STRAIGHT ANSWER TO MY QUESTION YESTERDAY. WHY ARE YOUR PEOPLE SO INTERESTED IN THE ZETA BEAM?

SIMPLE CURIOSITY. YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH US THANAGARIANS...

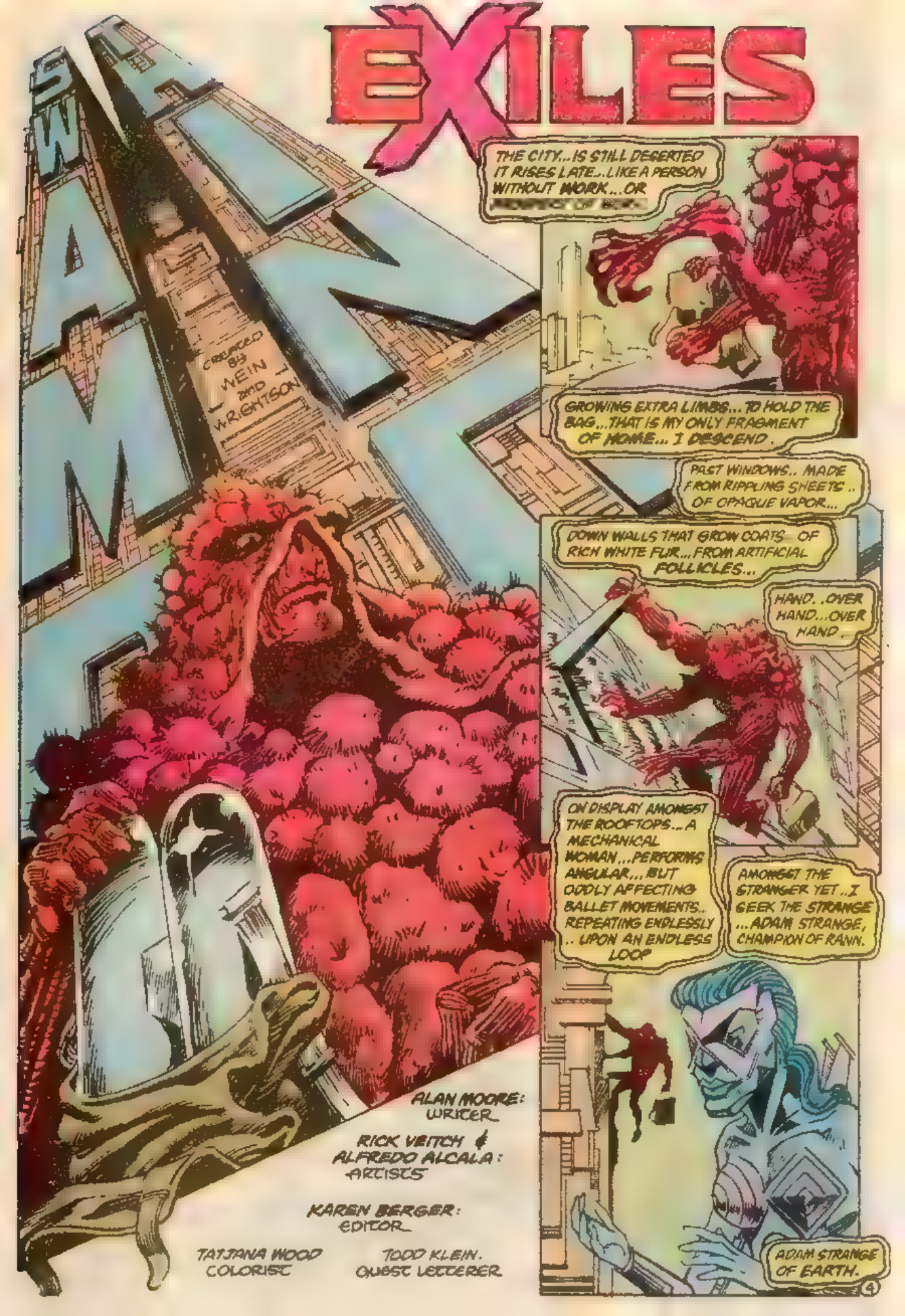
I'M NOT SURE I DO. I'VE BEEN CLOSE TO NEAR AND SHAKERA HOL FOR YEARS, BUT YOU AND SCIRA EK AREN'T LIKE THEM.

GOOD SOLDIERS ONCE, BUT IDEOLOGICALLY UNSUITED TO OUR NEW THANAGAR.

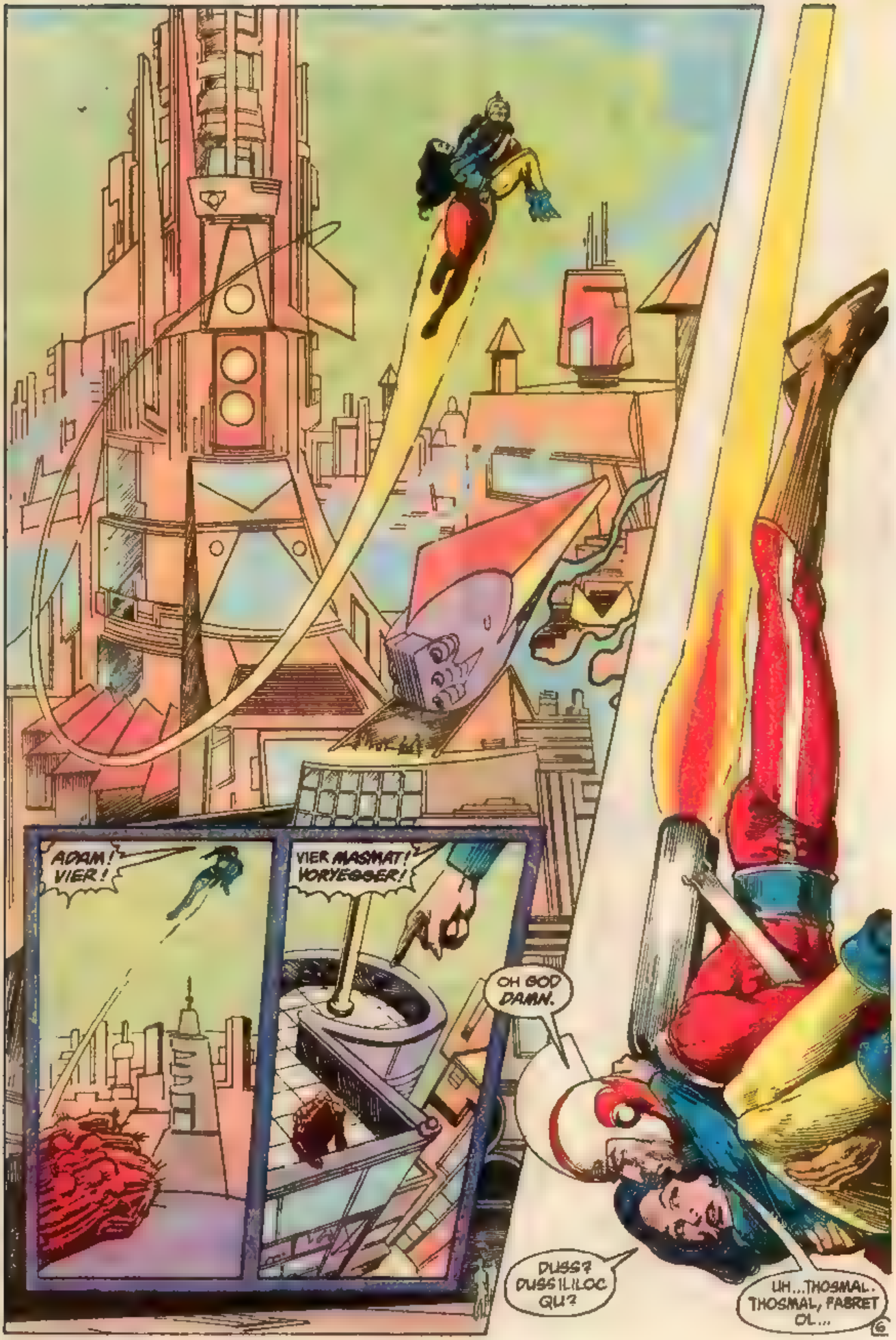
THEY PLACE SENTIMENTAL LOYALTY TO AN ADOPTED PLANET BEFORE DUTY TO THEIR HOMEWORLD, MERGING WITH A FOREIGN CULTURE.

IT HAPPENS TO MANY EXILES.

"IDEOLOGICALLY UNSUITED"? THINGS HAVE REALLY CHANGED FOR YOU HAWKPEOPLE, HAVEN'T THEY?
AS A CULTURE AGES, ITS FEATHERS SOMETIMES DARKEN.
YOU SOUND SO SUSPICIOUS OF US. WE COME MERELY TO HELP RANN WITH HER FAMINE.
IN RETURN FOR RANN'S TECHNOLOGY. YES VERY NOBLE OF YOU
YOU SNEER? WHAT PRICE DO YOU EXACT FOR KILLING RANN'S MONSTERS?
THEIR PRINCESS? A LIFE OF GLAMOR AND PRESTIGE UNIMAGINABLE UPON YOUR DREARY PLANET EARTH?
NO, YOU HAVE NO CALL TO MOCK ME. RATHER, WE SHOULD BE ALLIES.
IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE TO FIND OURSELVES IN CONFLICT WHEN WE HAVE SO MUCH IN COMMON.
WE ARE BOTH FIGHTERS, UNLIKE THESE INSIPID RANNIANS, WITH MILK FOR BLOOD.
AND HERE, WE ARE BOTH EXILES
GOODBYE, ADAM STRANGE I SHALL SEE YOU AT SECONDNOON, WHEN RANN'S ELDERS VOTE UPON OUR AID PROPOSAL.
5

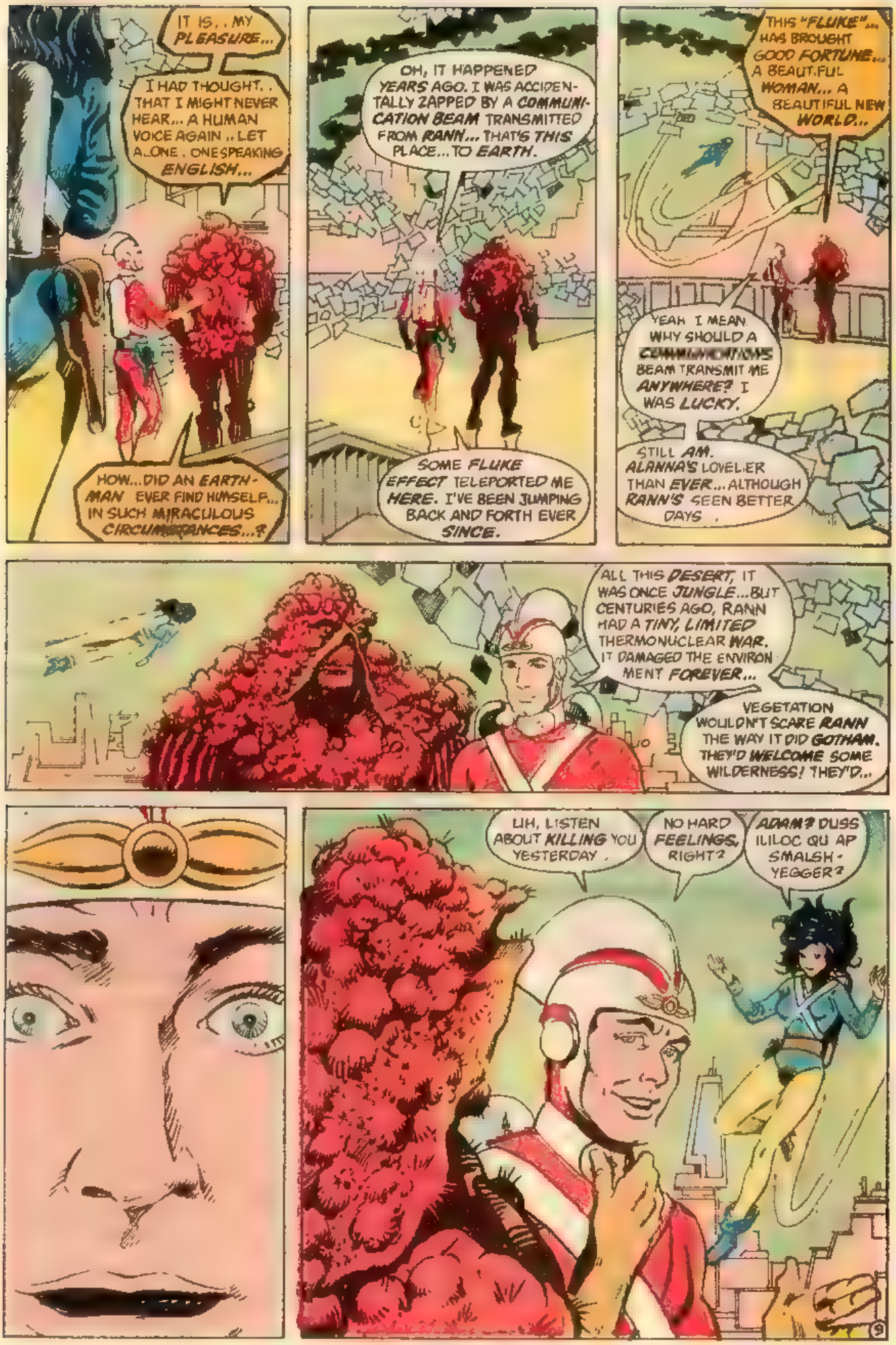

EXILES
SWAMP THING
CREATED BY WEIN AND WRIGHTSON
THE CITY... IS STILL DESERTED IT RISES LATE... LIKE A PERSON WITHOUT WORK... OR
GROWING EXTRA LIMBS... TO HOLD THE BAG... THAT IS MY ONLY FRAGMENT OF HOME... I DESCEND.
PAST WINDOWS.. MADE FROM RIPPLING SHEETS .. OF OPAQUE VAPOR...
DOWN WALLS THAT GROW COATS OF RICH WHITE FUR... FROM ARTIFICIAL FOLLICLES...
HAND. .OVER HAND...OVER HAND.
ON DISPLAY AMONGST THE ROOFTOPS... A MECHANICAL WOMAN... PERFORMS ANGULAR... BUT ODDLY AFFECTING BALLET MOVEMENTS.. REPEATING ENDLESSLY .. UPON AN ENDLESS LOOP
AMONGST THE STRANGER YET .. I SEEK THE STRANGE ...ADAM STRANGE, CHAMPION OF RANN.
ADAM STRANGE OF EARTH.
4
ALAN MOORE: WRITER
RICK VEITCH & ALFREDO ALCALA: ARTISTS
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR
TATJANA WOOD COLORIST
TODD KLEIN. GUEST LETTERER

ADAM? QU FAO AEL? QU FAO GLO MULMAP. OL FA THO DATTOCHAM UL APIC ZETA?
THOM BE FAS AEL...
CLAAB BA SISTRIS NEEM APS HAKKES-TRANGE.
TRA. OLS SISTRIT BU, EMSEC.
CLAAB GLUSTEN THO. BAS DOL FAO AEL AP BU PHANAGI ISP.
TRA. BA SLOVIER OL GLO DREMME..
...THO GRARAKLAK, THO VOKDEGGEN..
...SERT BA UL QU.
TRA. SERT BA UL QU.
AI! OL FA GLISPLACH BU! DUS FAO QU AO OL?
HUH? UR THO ANTRA GLISPLACH IR RETTE!
BA WORL THO! OL FA GLISPLACH BU! FORS BA OL, HET...
HA HA HA HA. SISTRIS THO, ALANNA, QU DOL GLISPA THO CHA GLISPLACH.
5

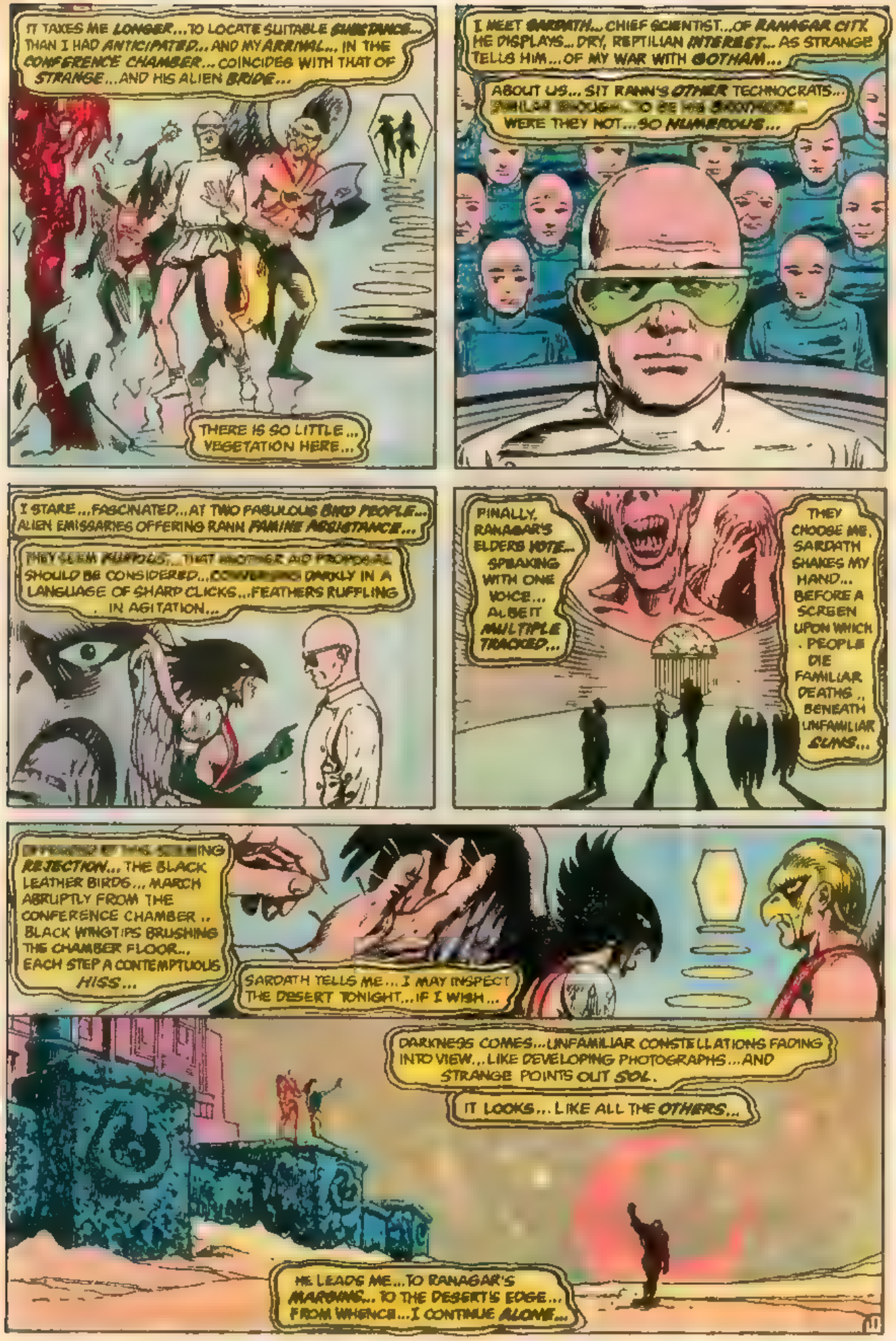

ADAM! VIER!
VIER MASMAT! VORYEGGER!
OH GOD DAMN.
DUSS? DUSS ILILOC QU?
UH...THOSMAL. THOSMAL, FABRET OL...
6

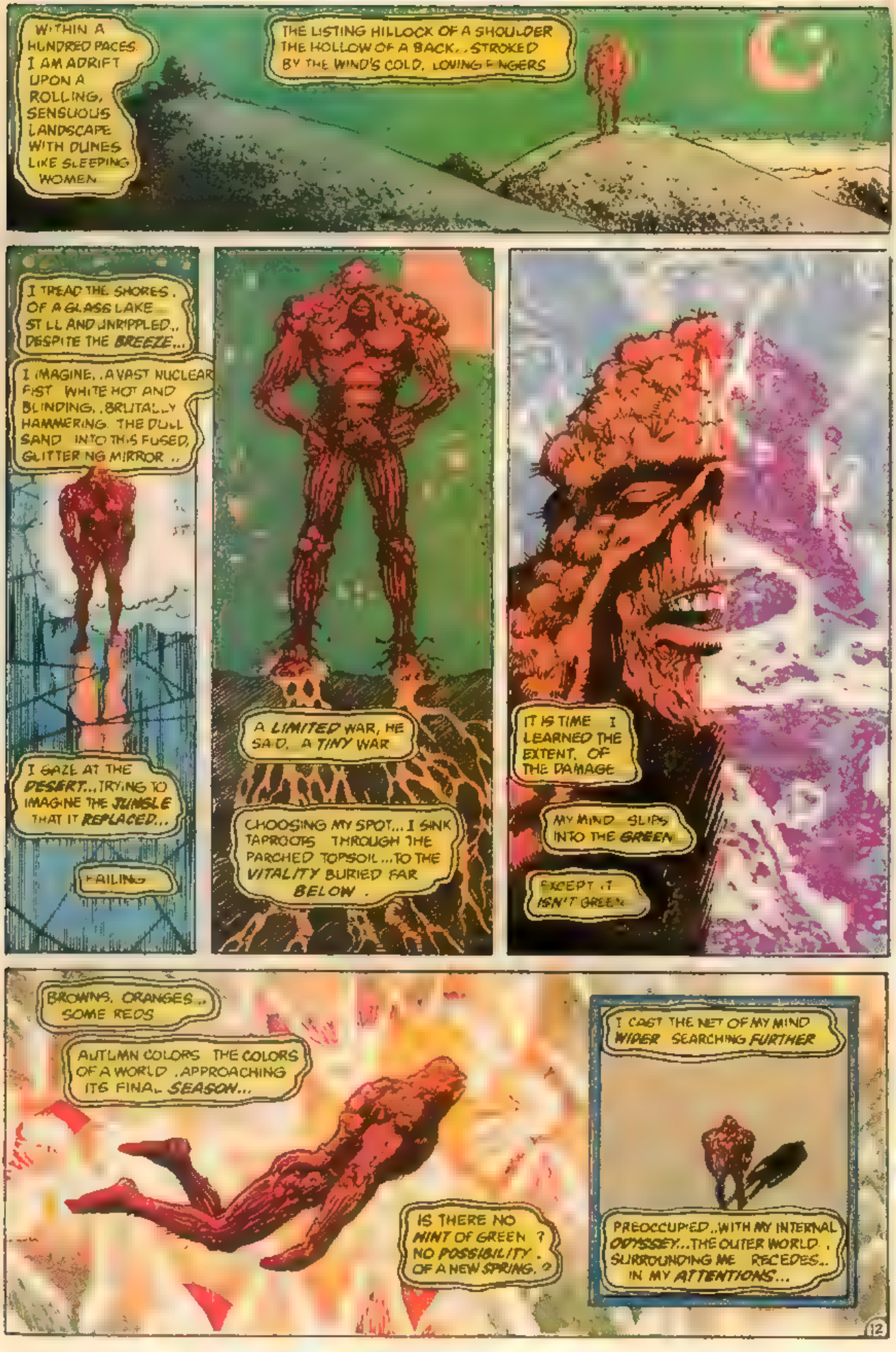
QU TOMTEL RARN, ONAMAO BU ..
. LARS BA DATTASTRANG AM GLUSTIC, GRUSNACH VORYEGGER!
ADAM, FA AELSMAT! THO HOORDA QUL!
QU DREST MAKTE LOD, VORYEGGER ! AM SUBLA, BA LALTO DATTA - CHAMS. QU!
TZU TZU TZU
BA SMETTE QU, BA RALZAT QU..
I BROUGHT YOUR BAG BACK...
MY GOD
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH.
SO DO YOU
7

BUT...WAIT A MINUTE. ARE YOU RELATED TO THE BEING I DESTROYED YESTERDAY?
NO. NOT RELATED. I AM THE SAME BEING.
I HAVE MERELY GROWN A NEW BODY...
ANOTHER BODY? THAT'S LIKE...
DO YOU COME FROM EARTH? DO YOU KNOW A CITY, AN AMERICAN CITY, CALLED GOTHAM? BEFORE I LEFT, THEY HAD SOME TROUBLE WITH A SWAMP MONSTER.
I HEARD THEY KILLED HIM
NO. THEY SEVERED MY BOND .. WITH THE EARTH... AND BURNED MY BODY... BUT MY MIND JUMPED ACROSS SPACE... LOOKING FOR NEW WORLDS ..THAT MIGHT SUSTAIN ME...
I AM...THE SWAMP THING.
ADAM? VORYEGGER ILLOC INGLISH?
UH, TRA OL UTLI "SMALSH-YEGGER," APS URTH.
THIS IS ALANNA OF RANAGAR, MY WIFE.' SHE...
HEY! THAT'S MY BAG, MY ROCKETPACK, THE ONE I BROUGHT WITH ME! I LOST IT AFTER ..
.. AFTER MY ACCIDENT IN THE ZETA BEAM
IT WAS YOU! YOUR MIND THAT MINE COLLIDED WITH. YOU RODE IN ON MY BEAM!
ZETA BEAM? I EXPERIENCED ...A FLASH IMAGES OF A MEN'S ROOM... THAT I DISMISSED AS HALLUCINATION...
HEH HEH THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A SURPRISE
ALANNA? SMALSH-YEGGER DOH RETTE GLISPLACH BU. QU DOL CHAP OL.
M-MISEL QU APS GLISPLACH, SMALSH-YEGGER
SHE SAYS THANKS FOR THE JETPACK. I'VE BORROWED HERS
8

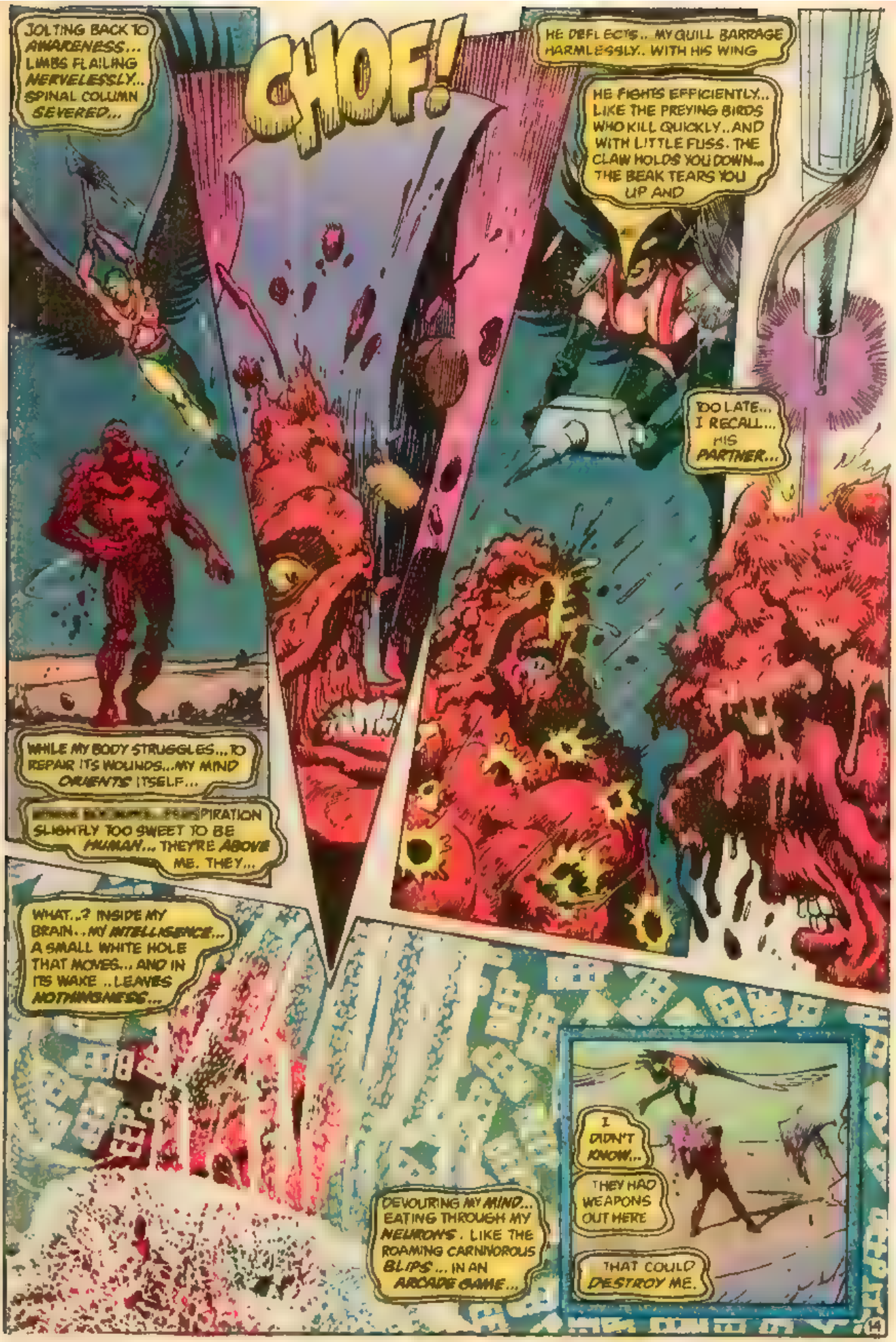

IT IS, , MY PLEASURE...
I HAD THOUGHT. . THAT I MIGHT NEVER HEAR... A HUMAN VOICE AGAIN .. LET A..ONE . ONE SPEAKING ENGLISH...
HOW...DID AN EARTH-MAN EVER FIND HIMSELF... IN SUCH MIRACULOUS CIRCUMSTANCES...?
OH, IT HAPPENED YEARS AGO. I WAS ACCIDENTALLY ZAPPED BY A COMMUNICATION BEAM TRANSMITTED FROM RANN... THAT'S THIS PLACE... TO EARTH.
SOME FLUKE EFFECT TELEPORTED ME HERE. I'VE BEEN JUMPING BACK AND FORTH EVER SINCE.
THIS "FLUKE"... HAS BROUGHT GOOD FORTUNE... A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN... A BEAUTIFUL NEW WORLD...
YEAH I MEAN. WHY SHOULD A COMMUNICATIONS BEAM TRANSMIT ME ANYWHERE? I WAS LUCKY.
STILL AM. ALANNA'S LOVELIER THAN EVER... ALTHOUGH RANN'S SEEN BETTER DAYS .
ALL THIS DESERT, IT WAS ONCE JUNGLE...BUT CENTURIES AGO, RANN HAD A TINY, LIMITED THERMONUCLEAR WAR. IT DAMAGED THE ENVIRONMENT FOREVER...
VEGETATION WOULDN'T SCARE RANN THE WAY IT DID GOTHAM. THEY'D WELCOME SOME WILDERNESS! THEY'D...
UH, LISTEN ABOUT KILLING YOU YESTERDAY .
NO HARD FEELINGS, RIGHT?
ADAM? DUSS ILILOC QU AP SMALSH-YEGGER?
9

ALANNA, BA HET ANAGLIM!
EP URTH, EPO GOTHAMAGAR, SMALSH-YEGGER FAOR LURSHASTRANG. FAO OL LURSHASTRANG EP RANN?
IU, ADAM! OLF FAO MASOLA!
YOUR WIFE... SEEMS EXCITED. COULD YOU .. TRANSLATE ..FOR ME .. ?
I'M SORRY... I WAS TELLING HER WHAT HAPPENED IN GOTHAM.
LISTEN, RANN IS SUFFERING FROM A FAMINE. COULD YOU PROMOTE PLANT GROWTH HERE, LIKE YOU D'D ON EARTH?
MAMOON. IU, SMALSH YEGGER, MAMOON.
I...DO NOT KNOW. I HAVE NEVER...MADE THE ATTEMPT... UPON SO LARGE A SCALE... OR SO DIFFERENT A WORLD..
BUT .. IF YOU WISH.. I WILL TRY...
THAT'S GREAT! ALANNA... SMALSH-YEGGER ILILOC "TRA"!
IU, SMALSH-YEGGER. QU HET ONAMAS BA!
LISTEN, WE HAVE TO TELL SARDATH THIS. CAN YOU GET TO THE CONFERENCE CHAMBER IN HIS MANSE? IT'S THAT BIG STRUCTURE OVER THERE...
IS... THERE PLANT LIFE THERE?
NOT MUCH, BUT SOME. CAN YOU MAKE IT UNDER YOUR OWN STEAM OR SHOULD I CALL A FLIER?
THERE IS.. NO NEED. I...SHALL BE THERE... BEFORE YOU
10


IT TAXES ME LONGER... TO LOCATE SUITABLE GUIDANCE... THAN I HAD ANTICIPATED... AND MY ARRIVAL... IN THE CONFERENCE CHAMBER... COINCIDES WITH THAT OF STRANGE... AND HIS ALIEN BRIDE...
THERE IS SO LITTLE... VEGETATION HERE...
I MEET SARDATH... CHIEF SCIENTIST... OF RANAGAR CITY. HE DISPLAYS... DRY, REPTILIAN INTEREST... AS STRANGE TELLS HIM... OF MY WAR WITH GOTHAM...
ABOUT US... SIT RANN'S OTHER TECHNOCRATS... WERE THEY NOT... SO NUMEROUS...
I STARE... FASCINATED... AT TWO FABULOUS BIRD PEOPLE... ALIEN EMISSARIES OFFERING RANN FAMINE ASSISTANCE...
THEY SEEM RUFFLED... THAT ANOTHER AID PROPOSAL SHOULD BE CONSIDERED... CONVERSING DARKLY IN A LANGUAGE OF SHARP CLICKS... FEATHERS RUFFLING IN AGITATION...
FINALLY, RANAGAR'S ELDERS VOTE... SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE... ALBEIT MULTIPLE TRACKED...
THEY CHOOSE ME, SARDATH SHAKES MY HAND... BEFORE A SCREEN UPON WHICH PEOPLE DIE FAMILIAR DEATHS... BENEATH UNFAMILIAR SUNS...
REJECTION... THE BLACK LEATHER BIRDS... MARCH ABRUPTLY FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAMBER... BLACK WINGTIPS BRUSHING THE CHAMBER FLOOR... EACH STEP A CONTEMPTUOUS HISS...
SARDATH TELLS ME... I MAY INSPECT THE DESERT TONIGHT... IF I WISH...
DARKNESS COMES... UNFAMILIAR CONSTELLATIONS FADING INTO VIEW... LIKE DEVELOPING PHOTOGRAPHS... AND STRANGE POINTS OUT SOL.
IT LOOKS... LIKE ALL THE OTHERS...
HE LEADS ME... TO RANAGAR'S MARGINS... TO THE DESERT'S EDGE... FROM WHENCE... I CONTINUE ALONE...
11

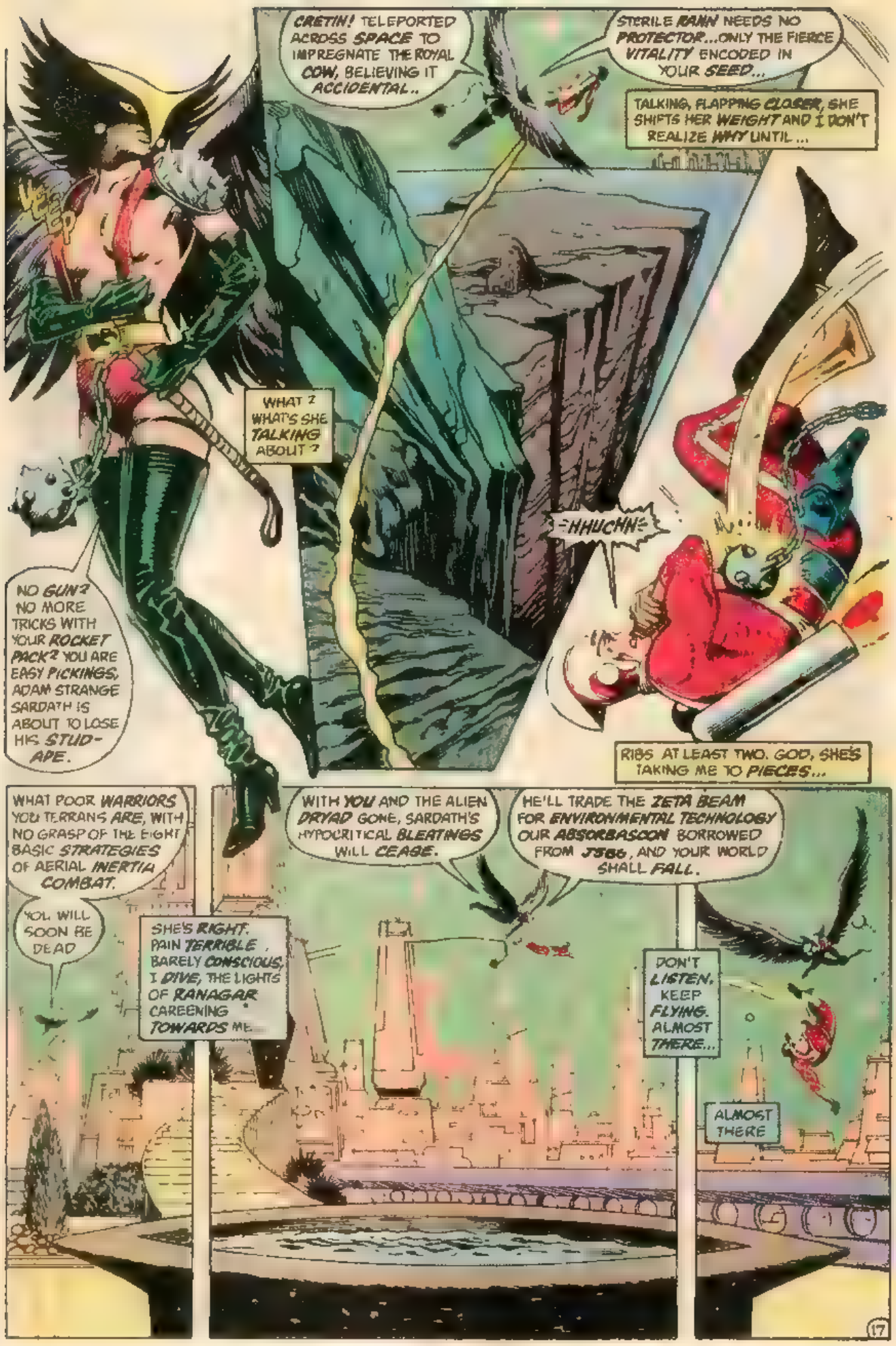

WITHIN A HUNDRED PACES I AM ADRIFT UPON A ROLLING, SENSUOUS LANDSCAPE WITH DUNES LIKE SLEEPING WOMEN
THE LISTING HILLOCK OF A SHOULDER THE HOLLOW OF A BACK.. STROKED BY THE WIND'S COLD, LOVING FINGERS
I TREAD THE SHORES OF A GLASS LAKE STILL AND UNRIPPLED.. DESPITE THE BREEZE...
I IMAGINE.. A VAST NUCLEAR FIST WHITE HOT AND BLINDING.. BRUTALLY HAMMERING THE DULL SAND INTO THIS FUSED, GLITTERING MIRROR..
I GAZE AT THE DESERT... TRYING TO IMAGINE THE JUNGLE THAT IT REPLACED...
FAILING
A LIMITED WAR, HE SAID, A TINY WAR
CHOOSING MY SPOT... I SINK TAPROOTS THROUGH THE PARCHED TOPSOIL... TO THE VITALITY BURIED FAR BELOW.
IT IS TIME I LEARNED THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE
MY MIND SLIPS INTO THE GREEN
EXCEPT IT ISN'T GREEN
BROWNS, ORANGES... SOME REDS
AUTUMN COLORS THE COLORS OF A WORLD APPROACHING ITS FINAL SEASON...
IS THERE NO HINT OF GREEN? NO POSSIBILITY OF A NEW SPRING.?
I CAST THE NET OF MY MIND WIDER SEARCHING FURTHER
PREOCCUPIED.. WITH MY INTERNAL ODYSSEY... THE OUTER WORLD SURROUNDING ME RECEDES.. IN MY ATTENTIONS...

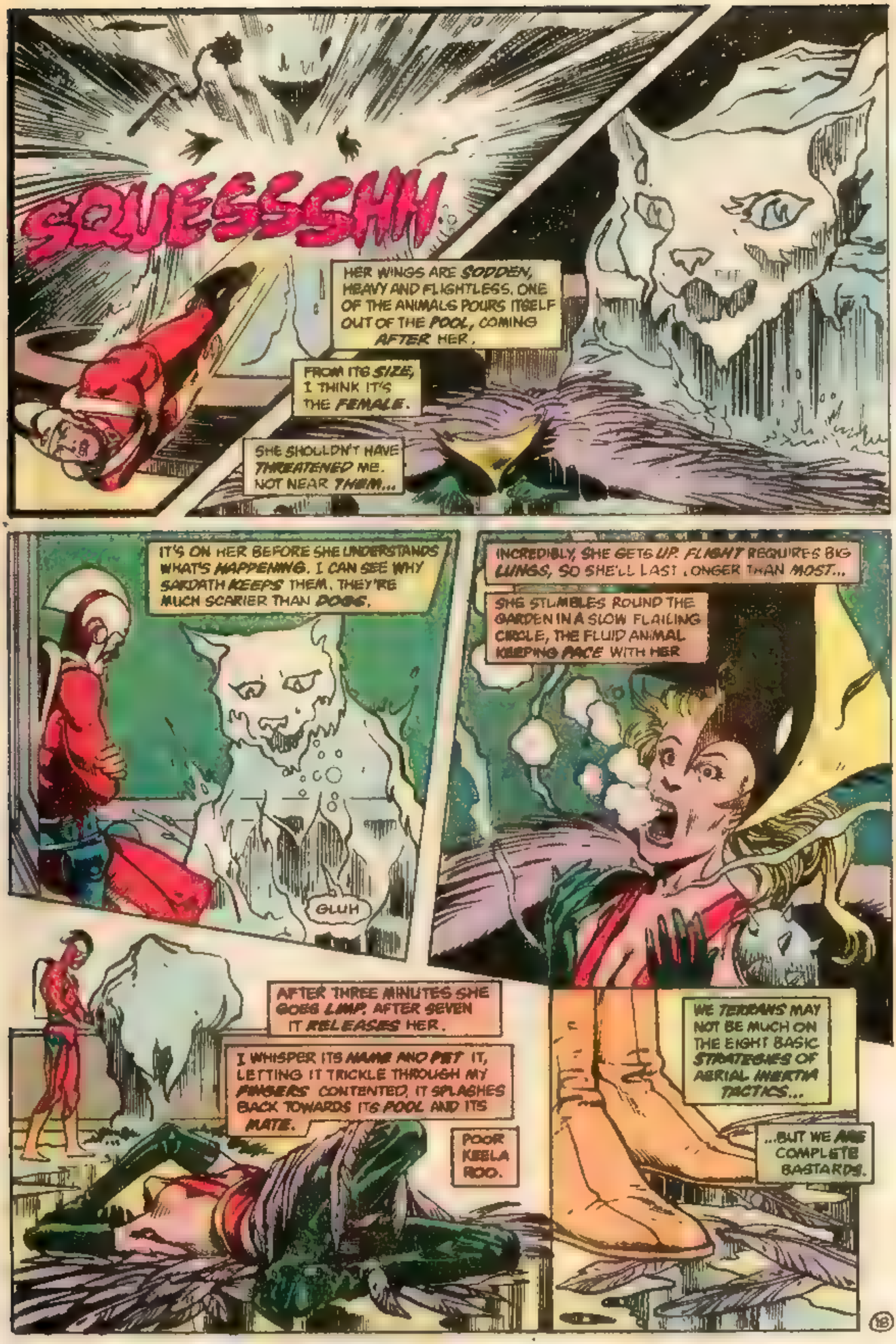
SOMEWHERE FAR, FAR BELOW... WHERE THE RADIATION DID NOT PENETRATE... THERE MUST YET BE LIFE...
SOME STILL-FERTILE STRATA... THAT REMAINS UNTOUCHED... BY THAT BLAZING HAND... OR ITS POISONOUS SHADOW...
SOMEWHERE TO THE SOUTH... IN RESPONSE TO MY PROBE... THERE IS THE BRIEFEST REVERBERATION... THE FAINTEST ECHO OF GREEN... I TRYING TO FOCUS... ON THE EXACT SPOT WHERE I EXPERIENCED THE TREMOR... I CLOSE IN RAPIDLY...
SIFTING THE UNFAMILIAR IMPULSES... IS DIFFICULT... AND CONFUSING...
I AM CLOSE... TO THE LIFE I SEEK... AND YET IT EVADES ME I HESITATE... AS IF AWAITING GUIDANCE FROM ABOVE...
...MOST... ALMOST THERE
CHOK!
13


JOLTING BACK TO AWARENESS... LIMBS FLAILING NERVELESSLY.. SPINAL COLUMN SEVERED...
CHOF!
HE DEFLECTS... MY QUILL BARRAGE HARMLESSLY.. WITH HIS WING
HE FIGHTS EFFICIENTLY... LIKE THE PREYING BIRDS WHO KILL QUICKLY.. AND WITH LITTLE FUSS. THE CLAW HOLDS YOU DOWN... THE BEAK TEARS YOU UP AND
TOO LATE... I RECALL... HIS PARTNER...
WHILE MY BODY STRUGGLES... TO REPAIR ITS WOUNDS... MY MIND ORIENTS ITSELF...
[illegible]SPIRATION SLIGHTLY TOO SWEET TO BE HUMAN... THEY'RE ABOVE ME. THEY...
WHAT..? INSIDE MY BRAIN.. MY INTELLIGENCE... A SMALL WHITE HOLE THAT MOVES... AND IN ITS WAKE .. LEAVES NOTHINGNESS...
DEVOURING MY MIND... EATING THROUGH MY NEURONS. LIKE THE ROAMING CARNIVOROUS BLIPS... IN AN ARCADE GAME...
I DIDN'T KNOW...
THEY HAD WEAPONS OUT HERE
THAT COULD DESTROY ME.
14

I KNEW IT
KNEW IT AS SOON AS I SAW THAT FLASH OF VIOLET.
THEY'VE HIT HIM WITH A MIND-EATER.
TYPICAL THANAGARIAN TACTIC ONE PINS HIM DOWN WHILE THE OTHER DRAWS A COMPUTERIZED BEAD ON HIM.
KATAR TOLD ME THANAGARIANS USE ANCIENT WEAPONS SO THEIR ENEMIES WILL TEND TO FORGET HOW MUCH TECHNOLOGY THEY POSSESS.
SNEAKY.
IN FACT, A DIRECT ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT SEEMS OUT OF CHARACTER FOR THEM.
THEY MUST BE DESPERATE FOR RANN TO ACCEPT THEIR AID PROPOSAL SO THEY CAN HAVE THE ZETA BEAM.
I WONDER WHY?
TZU TZU TZU
15

INCREDIBLE REACTIONS. WITHIN SECONDS, SCIRA EK IS RIGHT BEHIND ME
BIG. FAST. MAYBE NOT TOO BRIGHT. HIS HELMET'S WINGLESS' LOWER CADRE HE'S WAITING FOR ME TO SLOW DOWN, TURN AND FACE HIM.
OKAY. CUT JETS, REDUCE SPEED, DRAW HIM CLOSER...
NOW
JETS ON FULL
I JACK KNIFE, TURNING TOWARDS HIM AS HE FLOUNDERS IN THE MOONLIGHT, BLINDED, FLAPPING IN PANIC...
HE ISN'T A BIRD OF PREY ANYMORE
HE'S A CLAY PIGEON.
HIS SCREAM BECOMES INAUDIBLE LONG SECONDS BEFORE HE HITS FOR ALL HIS THANAGARIAN TRAINING, I TOOK HIM; ATE HIM UP LIKE MERINGUE...
SHE SHRUGS ONE BLACK WING. MY ARM SNAPS.
NOW, SHE IS GOOD.
BEHIND ME, THE FAINTEST WHISPER, A RAZOR CUTTING AIR.
KEELA ROO. I'D FORGOTTEN. HE DISTRACTED ME WHILE SHE
AAAAAA!
SNAK!


CRETIN! TELEPORTED ACROSS SPACE TO IMPREGNATE THE ROYAL COW, BELIEVING IT ACCIDENTAL..
STERILE RANN NEEDS NO PROTECTOR...ONLY THE FIERCE VITALITY ENCODED IN YOUR SEED...
TALKING, FLAPPING CLOSER, SHE SHIFTS HER WEIGHT AND I DON'T REALIZE WHY UNTIL...
WHAT? WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT?
=HHUCHN=
NO GUN? NO MORE TRICKS WITH YOUR ROCKET PACK? YOU ARE EASY PICKINGS, ADAM STRANGE SARDATH IS ABOUT TO LOSE HIS STUD-APE.
RIBS AT LEAST TWO. GOD, SHE'S TAKING ME TO PIECES...
WHAT POOR WARRIORS YOU TERRANS ARE, WITH NO GRASP OF THE EIGHT BASIC STRATEGIES OF AERIAL INERTIA COMBAT.
YOU WILL SOON BE DEAD
SHE'S RIGHT. PAIN TERRIBLE, BARELY CONSCIOUS, I DIVE, THE LIGHTS OF RANAGAR CAREENING TOWARDS ME...
WITH YOU AND THE ALIEN DRYAD GONE, SARDATH'S HYPOCRITICAL BLEATINGS WILL CEASE.
HE'LL TRADE THE ZETA BEAM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY OUR ABSORBASCON BORROWED FROM J'66, AND YOUR WORLD SHALL FALL.
DON'T LISTEN. KEEP FLYING. ALMOST THERE...
ALMOST THERE


SQUESSSHH
HER WINGS ARE SODDEN, HEAVY AND FLIGHTLESS. ONE OF THE ANIMALS POURS ITSELF OUT OF THE POOL, COMING AFTER HER.
FROM ITS SIZE, I THINK IT'S THE FEMALE.
SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE THREATENED ME. NOT NEAR THEM...
IT'S ON HER BEFORE SHE UNDERSTANDS WHAT'S HAPPENING. I CAN SEE WHY SARDATH KEEPS THEM. THEY'RE MUCH SCARIER THAN DOGS.
GLUH
INCREDIBLY, SHE GETS UP. FLIGHT REQUIRES BIG LUNGS, SO SHE'LL LAST LONGER THAN MOST...
SHE STUMBLES ROUND THE GARDEN IN A SLOW FLAILING CIRCLE, THE FLUID ANIMAL KEEPING PACE WITH HER
AFTER THREE MINUTES SHE GOES LIMP. AFTER SEVEN IT RELEASES HER.
I WHISPER ITS NAME AND PET IT, LETTING IT TRICKLE THROUGH MY FINGERS CONTENTED, IT SPLASHES BACK TOWARDS ITS POOL AND ITS MATE.
POOR KEELA ROO.
WE TERRANS MAY NOT BE MUCH ON THE EIGHT BASIC STRATEGIES OF AERIAL INERTIA TACTICS...
...BUT WE ARE COMPLETE BASTARDS.

NEXT DAY, THANAGAR SEVERS DIPLOMATIC LINKS WITH RANN AND SARDATH LOOKS DISTINCTLY *RELIEVED*.

THE SWAMP CREATURE HAS RECOVERED FROM THE MIND-EATER. AT *SECOND-DAWN* HE SETS OUT ONCE MORE FOR THE DESERT, SEEKING *FERTILITY*.

BY *FIRSTNOON* HE'S LOCATED A STRATA OF [redacted] *SOIL*, WHICH HE PROMISES TO BRING TO THE *SURFACE*.

FOR MILES AROUND THE CACTUS ROOTS BEGIN TO *WRITHE*. THE GROUND *BOILS* WITH THE PROMISE OF HIDDEN *LIFE*...

DINGDINGDINGDING!

FROM CRYOGENIC FREEZERS COME OLD *SEEDS*, SOWN IN NEW *SOIL*.

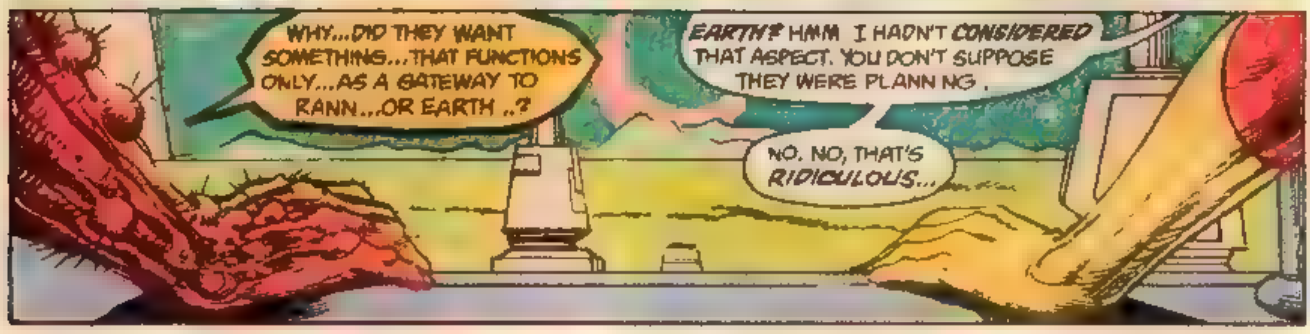
THE ELEMENTAL FROWNS, CONCENTRATING, AND AS THE FIRST BRIGHT SHOOTS EMERGE, THE OLDER RANAGARIANS WEEP OR APPLAUD.

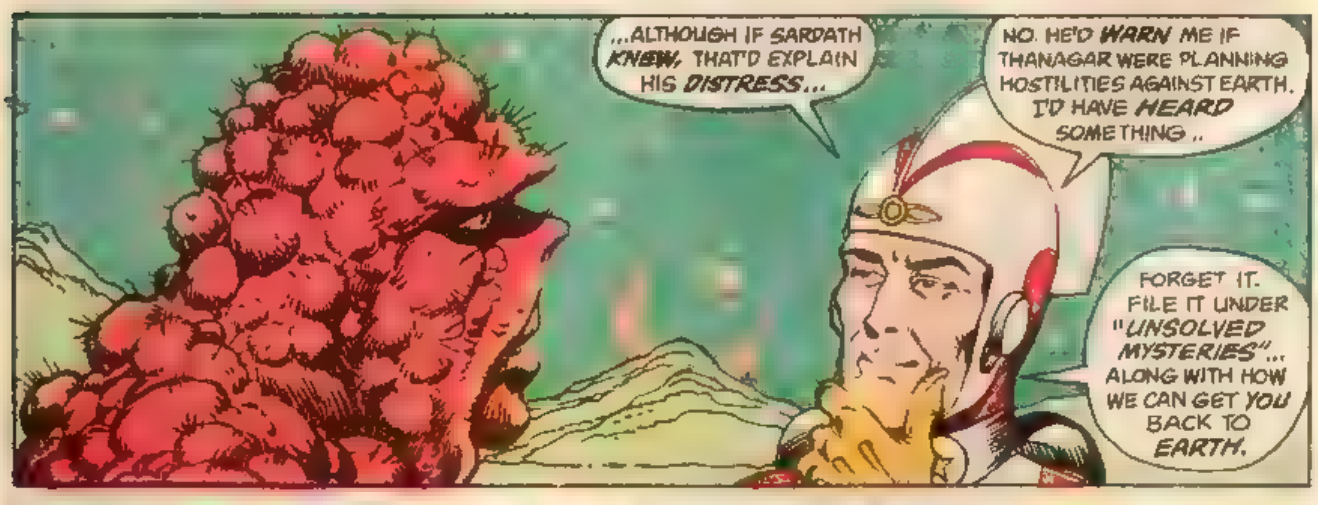
THE SOWING WAS MIRACULOUS SHALL THE HARVEST BE LESS SO?

PSSSHH

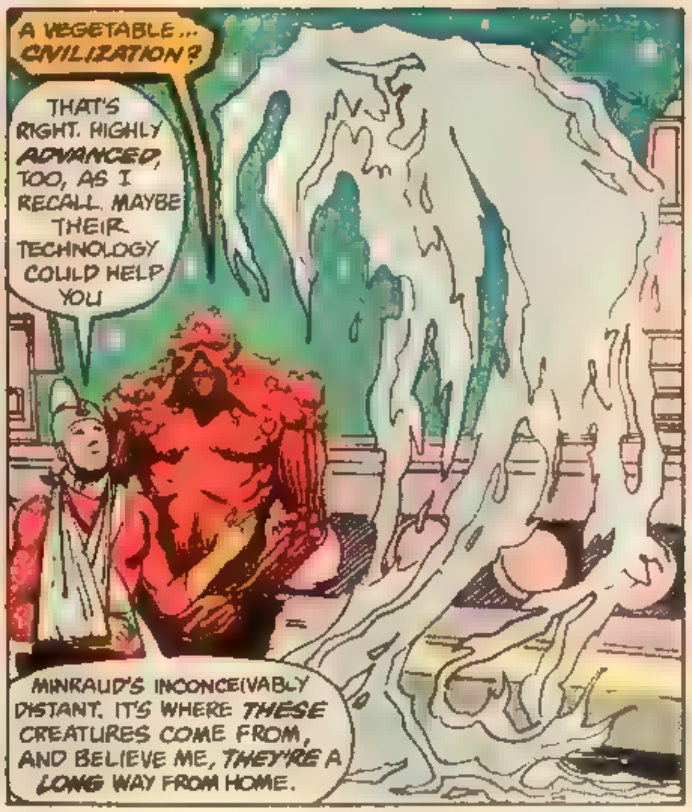
ADAM!

IT'S A BEGINNING.
I HOPE RANN CAN BUILD FROM THIS AND GRADUALLY RESTORE HER ECOSTRUCTURE.
ANYWAY, IT'S BETTER DOING IT LIKE THIS THAN TRADING THE ZETA BEAM TO THANAGAR.


WHY...DID THEY WANT SOMETHING...THAT FUNCTIONS ONLY...AS A GATEWAY TO RANN...OR EARTH ..?
EARTH? HMM I HADN'T CONSIDERED THAT ASPECT. YOU DON'T SUPPOSE THEY WERE PLANN NG .
NO. NO, THAT'S RIDICULOUS...


...ALTHOUGH IF SARDATH KNEW, THAT'D EXPLAIN HIS DISTRESS...
NO. HE'D WARN ME IF THANAGAR WERE PLANNING HOSTILITIES AGAINST EARTH. I'D HAVE HEARD SOMETHING ..
FORGET IT. FILE IT UNDER "UNSOLVED MYSTERIES"... ALONG WITH HOW WE CAN GET YOU BACK TO EARTH.

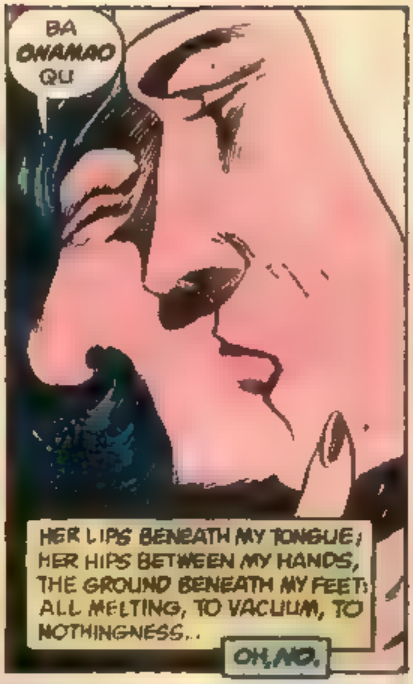
RETURNING TO EARTH...IS USELESS... WHILE I CANNOT LIVE THERE...
I NEED SOMEWHERE... THAT CAN HELP ME CURE ...MY BIO-ELECTRICAL PROBLEMS..
HMM. KEELA ROO MENTIONED J586, A PLANET NEAR MINRAUD WITH A VEGETABLE CIVILIZATION

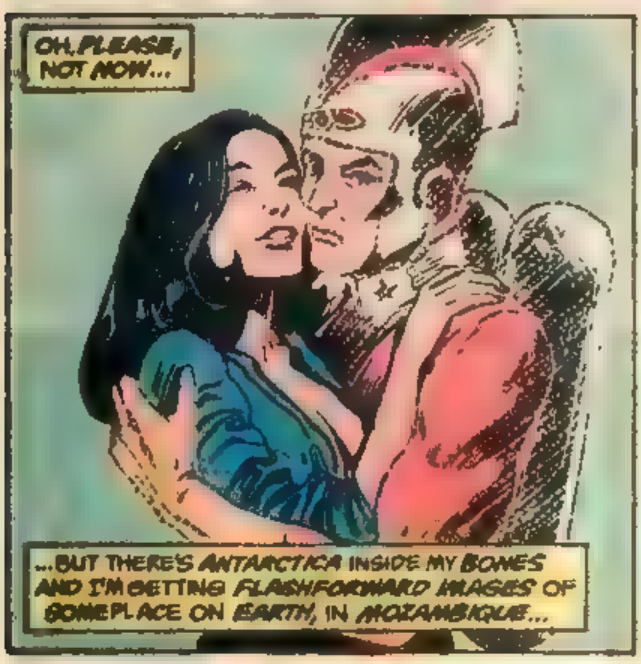

A VEGETABLE... CIVILIZATION?
THAT'S RIGHT. HIGHLY ADVANCED, TOO, AS I RECALL. MAYBE THEIR TECHNOLOGY COULD HELP YOU
MINRAUD'S INCONCEIVABLY DISTANT. IT'S WHERE THESE CREATURES COME FROM, AND BELIEVE ME, THEY'RE A LONG WAY FROM HOME.

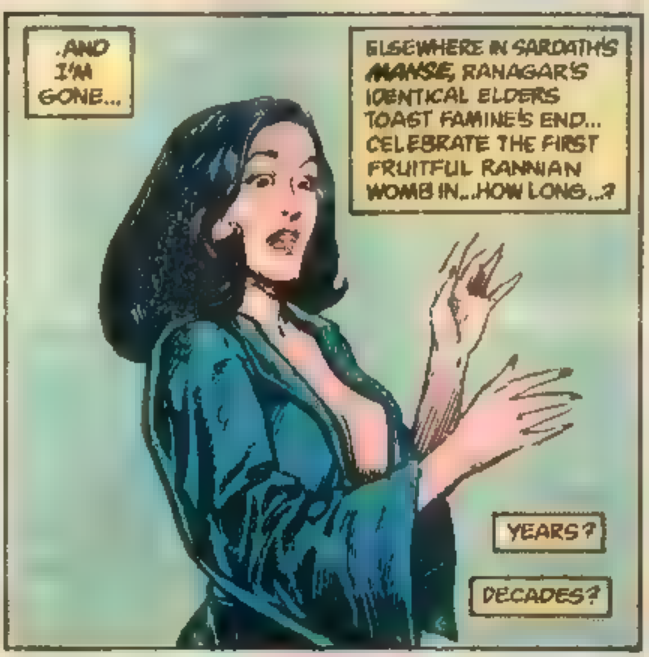
AS ARE... WE ALL.
A WHOLE CIVILIZATION. I AM EAGER... TO SEE SUCH A THING.
BUT WHAT OF YOU ..? WILL YOU RETURN .. TO THE EARTH...?
YEAH ANY TIME NOW WHY?

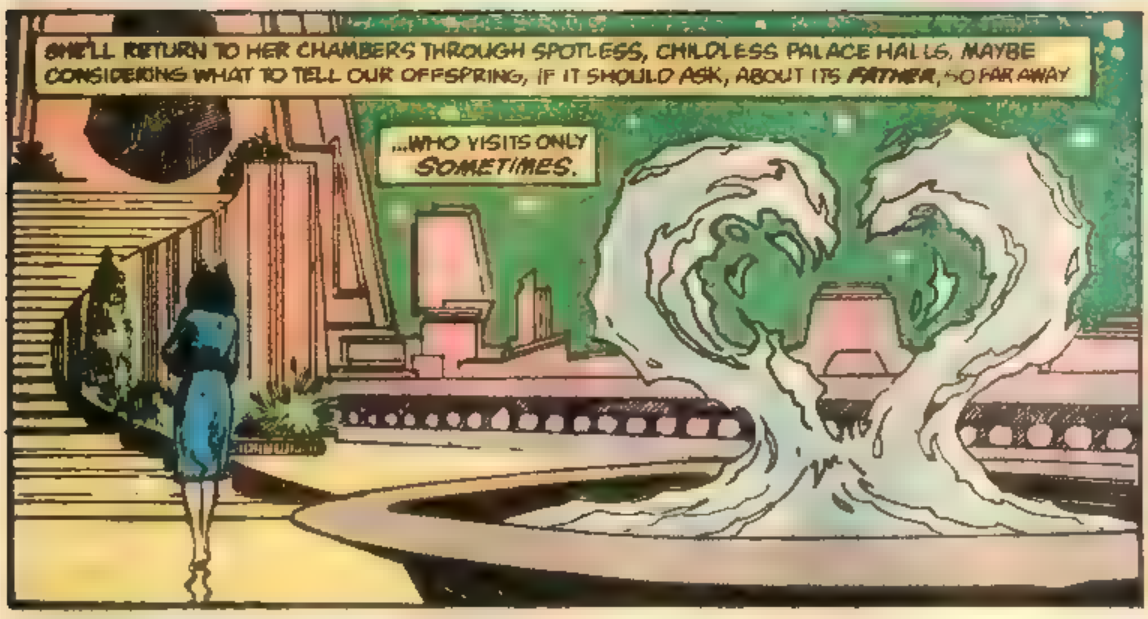
COULD YOU DELIVER A MESSAGE FOR ME ? A LOUISIANA WOMAN NAMED ABIGAIL CABLE
TELL HER .. I'M ALIVE ... AND THAT ONE DAY ... I WILL COME HOME
PLEASE TELL HER. IT WOULD DO. SO MUCH ... TO BRIDGE THE LIGHT YEARS ... BETWEEN US .
YES. I CAN IMAG NE. OF COURSE I'LL TELL HER
MINRAUD'S THAT BRIGHT STAR IN THE NORTHERN SKY.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, FRIEND. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
ADAM!
IU, ADAM! BA CHECHEDO QU'
OH. EDUKU, ALANNA, ONAMAOL BU. BA LAU ILILOC FADTA AP SMALSH YEGGER. DUSS MAOL...
ADAM, SASSU.
BA MASSIENT!
21

PREGNANT? BUT...BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW SO SOON? IS...
UH, I MEAN, DUSS FAO QU MASSIENT? DUSS TOMU QU DOH RETTE?
MASS-LOC BU. IU, ADAM, BA FAO SA GLELIG!


BA ONAMAO QU
HER LIPS BENEATH MY TONGUE; HER HIPS BETWEEN MY HANDS, THE GROUND BENEATH MY FEET; ALL MELTING, TO VACUUM, TO NOTHINGNESS..
OH, NO.


OH, PLEASE, NOT NOW...
...BUT THERE'S ANTARCTICA INSIDE MY BONES AND I'M GETTING FLASHFORWARD IMAGES OF SOMEPLACE ON EARTH, IN MOZAMBIQUE...


...AND I'M GONE...
ELSEWHERE IN SARDATH'S MANSE, RANAGAR'S IDENTICAL ELDERS TOAST FAMINE'S END... CELEBRATE THE FIRST FRUITFUL RANNAN WOMB IN...HOW LONG...?
YEARS?
DECADES?


SHE'LL RETURN TO HER CHAMBERS THROUGH SPOTLESS, CHILDLESS PALACE HALLS, MAYBE CONSIDERING WHAT TO TELL OUR OFFSPRING, IF IT SHOULD ASK, ABOUT ITS FATHER, SO FAR AWAY
...WHO VISITS ONLY SOMETIMES.

NEXT: REUNION

SWAMP THING
59
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U.K. 40p
APR 87
FOR MATURE READERS
TOTLEBEN
1982
COURT
ABIGAIL CABLE
MONSTER LOVER
WHO watches the WATCHMEN?
BY
BISSETTE, MOORE, VEITCH & ALCALA

RRRAARRGGGHHH

THE GAME HAS GONE ON, WITHOUT PAUSE, FOR OVER TWO YEARS.

IT IS A GAME WITHOUT FORM OR RULES, DRIVEN BY THE CHAOTIC FRENZY OF ITS PLAYERS TOWARD THE ONLY GOAL THE GAME HAS:

EEEEE!

YYEEEHHAAHHHHH!

PENANCE.

AAAAEEEEGGH

PENANCE WITHOUT REDEMPTION, AGONY WITHOUT END.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

UK!

HALFTIME!!!

MAKE WAY, MY DARLINGS...

AH, HOW FARES ANTON ARCANE, THE CORE OF OUR CALAMITY?

MY DEAR, WINSOME WELT... YOU'RE WEATHERING THE GAME TOO, TOO WELL.

UNNHHH..

UH...

I'LL HAVE TO STEP UP THE PACE OF THE PROCEEDINGS IF YOU'RE TO PAY YOUR DUES AS YOU SHOULD..

...SINCE YOU'VE BARELY ATONED FOR YOUR CRIMES PRIOR TO YOUR THIRD BIRTHDAY IN YOUR LAST LIFETIME!

WHATEVER SHALL WE DO WHEN WE REACH THE TIME OF YOUR *BROTHER'S* BIRTH, WHEN YOU--

UNHHH..

;choke! M-MY... BROTHER...?

MY DEAR ANTON, HOW *COULD* YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR BELOVED GREGORI? YOU'VE SOOOO MUCH TO ANSWER FOR IN THE WAY OF SIBLING RIVALRY AND SUCH...

WHY, *EONS* OF TORMENT SHAN'T *BEGIN* TO SETTLE THAT DEBT. I'M TOLD YOU'RE STILL ACCUMULATING INTEREST!

I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU THAT THIS SORT OF THING SIMPLY *ISN'T* DONE, DARLING, BUT FOR *YOU*...

...WE'LL CALL IT AN ENTERTAINING DIVERSION--A HALFTIME SHOW! YOU'VE SO MANY, MANY MORE GAMES TO PARTAKE IN, AND IT ONLY SEEMS FAIR TO UNVEIL THE SCOREBOARD FOR OUR STAR PARTICIPANT EARLY IN THE PROCEEDINGS.

BEHOLD, ANTON ARCANE, YOUR *BROTHER'S LOT* THE *MAP* OF YOUR SINS...

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HIS NAME IS

(NAME? I HAVE A NAME?)

HIS NAME IS GREGORY AR--

(NO! DON'T SPEAK IT, THINK IT.!)

HIS NAME IS GREGORY, AND HE SITS READING TO HIS BELOVED DAUGHTER, AND ALL IS RIGHT WITH HIS WORLD.

(BUT MY EYE, IT FEELS SO STRANGE, AND MY KNEES--)

ALL IS RIGHT

(MY EYE, IT FEELS)

WITH HIS WORLD AND HE IS READING TO HIS BELOVED DAUGHTER, ABIGAIL.

(LOOSE, IT FEELS LOOSE, I CAN'T READ WITH IT, IT HURTS)

HE IS READING HER FAVORITE PASSAGE, BEWILDERED AT HOW IMPORTANT IT SEEMS TO HER.

"REMEMBER THAT I AM THY CREATURE; I OUGHT TO BE THY ADAM, BUT I AM RATHER THE FALLEN ANGEL..."

FRANKENSTEIN

MARY SHELLEY

WHY, HE WONDERS, DOES THIS BOOK FASCINATE HER SO? IT DOESN'T SEEM PROPER... THOUGH, AS EVER, HE INDULGES HER.

"... WHOM THOU DRIVEST FROM JOY FOR NO MISDEED. EVERYWHERE I SEE BLISS, FROM WHICH I ALONE AM IRREVOCABLY EXCLUDED."

"I WAS BENEVOLENT AND GOOD; MISERY MADE ME A FIEND. MAKE ME HAPPY, AND I--"

"... I SHALL AGAIN BE VIRTUOUS."

FRANKENSTEIN

FATHER, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MONSTER AFTERWARDS? WHERE DID HE GO?

THE BOOK SAYS--

OH, I KNOW WHAT THE BOOK SAYS. IT ISN'T FAIR! I DON'T BELIEVE HE DIED ON THE NORTH POLE. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT *REALLY* HAPPENED TO HIM, FATHER...

... CAN'T YOU THINK OF A *BETTER* ENDING?

HMMMMMM .. LET'S SEE. HE DRIFTED ON THAT ICEBERG FOR DAYS, AND AS HE DRIFTED, THE ICEBERG MELTED...

... UNTIL IT MELTED ALL AWAY!

SO HE BEGAN TO SWIM, AND SWIM, AND SWIM...

. . UNTIL HE SWAM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN ITSELF, AND CAME ASHORE IN AMERICA. THERE WAS A DOCTOR THERE, A DOCTOR MUCH LIKE FRANKENSTEIN, WHO CAPTURED HIM IMPRISONED HIM...

... IMPRISONED HIM AND...

(NO! IT HURTS! HURTS!)

... DR CHOMES HURT HIM...

...THEN HE ESCAPED!

UH, YES... HE ESCAPED... HE RAN...

...RAN. UNTIL THE CAB CAME...

(RUN! AWAY! IT HURTS!)

...THE CAB OPENED ITS DOOR TO HIM!..

...AND HE CLIMBED INTO THE CARRIAGE, AND THE DRIVER TOOK HIM HOME TO LIVE WITH HIM, HAPPILY EVER AFTER! YAY!

NO... THE DRIVER'S WIFE.. SHE SCREAMED.. AND HE HAD TO FLEE... AGAIN...

HE WAS ALONE ...IN A STRANGE LAND... HE HAD TO... *FIND* HER...

(...FIND HER..)

...BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE SHE WAS... WHERE *HE* WAS... HE'D LAST SEEN HER... WITH THE *GREEN MAN*.

GREEN MAN? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, FATHER?

4

CONTINUED ON 3?? PAGE OF MAN

YOU'VE RUINED THE HAPPY ENDING, FATHER...

SING TO ME, ABIGAIL. SING TO YOUR FATHER...

SHE SINGS TO HIM, AND HIS HEART SOARS WITH HER VOICE...

...AND HE SAVORS THE MOMENT..

♫ ...NUUUHH! UH HUN ♫ HUH NUUUHHH-UH-HUN UH!

JUMPIN' JESUS ON A CRUTCH!

WH-WHAT IS IT?

LOOK, FATHER...

POACHERS! POACHERS ON MY ESTATE!

PLUCHA! NYA UNG PLUCHAS!!

YAAAHHHH!

THEY BOLT AND RUN FROM HIM, HEADING DEEP INTO HIS FOREST...

FATHER! YOU'RE CHASING THEM INTO THE MINE FIELD!!

OH MY LORD...

STOP! STOPPPP!!

...HE CALLS TO THEM... THEY HAVE TO LISTEN TO HIM!

FLAH.. FLAAAAH

THE MINE FIELD... THEY MUST... STOP..

FFLLLAAAAAA

SPUT

HE CRIES TO THEM AS LOUDLY AS HE CAN...

...UNTIL HIS LARYNX EXPLODES...

(MY THROAT!)

...UNTIL THERE IS NO VOICE TO CRY OUT WITH.

AAAAAA

:UK

created by LEN WEIN and BERNIE WRIGHTSON

REUNION

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SHE HAD ONCE AGAIN DREAMT OF THE MONSTER. IT HAD COME TO HER IN HER DREAMS, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, AND SHE HAD RECOGNIZED HIM...

IT WAS..

...IT WAS NOT ALEC.

THE ACHE IN HER THROAT WAS UNBEARABLE.

SHE NURSED THE PAIN IN HER THROAT WITH LIBERAL HELPINGS OF HONEY IN HER TEA.

IF ONLY THE ACHE OF HER LOSS WERE SO EASILY SOOTHED.

SHE BRACED HERSELF FOR AN UNPLEASANT DAY. TODAY, OF ALL DAYS, HAD TO START WITH A NIGHTMARE.

NOT THAT SHE HATED HER JOB AT THE NURSING HOME...NO, IT WASN'T THAT.

SHE JUST COULDN'T HELP MISSING THE CHILDREN AT ELYSIUM LAWNS. THOUGH THEY WERE AUTISTIC OR EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED, AND THE HEIGHT OF CARING FOR THEM HAD OFTEN LEFT HER HEARTBROKEN, THEY WERE YOUNG...

SPANISH ACRES HOME FOR THE ELDERLY

...THERE WAS ALWAYS MORE...

...WHERE AS HERE..

M-M-MOWNIN', MIZ CABLE.

...HERE IT WAS... DIFFERENT.

GOOD MORNING YOURSELF, AMY. HOW ARE YOU FEE--

STEP ASIDE, LADIES!

OOOOHHH!

OH, AMY, LET ME HELP YOU

'POLOGIES, LITTLE MISSY!

AWFULLY CLUMSY OF ME--

OOOHHH, M-M-MY CLOTHES!

M-MY CLOTHES ARE R-RUINED.. M-MY GUESTS WILL BE S-SO CROSS--

NOW, AMY, YOU KNOW NOBODY'S COMIN' TO SEE YOU!

--TODAY'S VISITIN' DAY!

AMY, YOU GOT NO FAMILY, NO ONE'S COMIN TO VISIT YOU TODAY OR ANY DAY

QUIT YOUR WHINING OR I'LL--

--HAVE TO BE OFF TO SEE TO THE BREAKFAST SERVICE, I UNDERSTAND.

YES, GATOR

ABIGAIL, PROCEED TO MR. JACOBSON'S ROOM AND PREPARE HIM FOR HIS FAMILY'S ARRIVAL. THEY ARE EXPECTED SHORTLY.

S-SURE.. UH, MORNING, MISS CLAIBORNE I'LL SEE TO IT NOW

HMM..

ABIGAIL, COULD YOU ALSO SEE TO AMY'S ATTIRE. YOU REALLY MUST BE MORE CAREFUL, AMY.

♪ AS I WALK THIS / LEVEE 'ROUND, I'M LOOKIN FOR THAT BULLU'AH HE MUST BE FOUND... ♫

HE HAD TO FIND HER

(FIND HER)

BUT IT WAS SO HARD TO CONCENTRATE, SO HARD TO

(SEE, HARD TO SEE, MY EYE FEELS)

KEEP TRACK OF WHAT HE HAD TO DO

(LOOSE, IT HURTS)

THEY HAD DARED TO COME INTO HIS OWN HOME WITH TALK OF TAKING ABIGAIL AWAY FROM HIM... SHE HAD RUN AWAY CRYING... HE COULD HEAR HER STILL..

(M-MY THROAT, TASTING BLOOD)

EVER SINCE ABIGAIL'S MOTHER HAD DIED, HE HAD DONE HIS BEST TO GIVE HER A PROPER HOME. BUT HIS WORK TOOK HIM AWAY OFTEN, AND HIS BROTHER, HIS MEDDLING BROTHER--

--HIS BROTHER AN--

(DON'T DARE SPEAK IT! I HAVE NO BROTHER!)

-- HAD MADE AN ISSUE OF IT TOO OFTEN.. THE AUTHORITIES HAD COME, AND THERE HAD BEEN HARSH WORDS--

(BLOOD IN MY THROAT)

--AND ABIGAIL RAN CRYING.. HE MUST FIND HER...

:SOB:

OH, ABIGAIL...

SHE MUST BE

(FOUND HER)

FOUND..

...MY DAUGHTER...

JA, COME IN!

NOK NOK

ABBY! I'VE JUST FINISHED REPAIRING MISS CLAIBORNE'S WATCH AND I AM ALL READY TO SEE MY FAMILY.

WELL, *ALMOST* READY... I CAN SEE YOU'VE HAD BREAKFAST THIS MORNING...

YOU'RE STILL *WEARING* SOME OF IT, TOWNCLOCK!

ACH, YOU FUSS SO... IFF MY OWN DAUGHTER FUSSED SO, I'D...

I'M SURE SHE'LL FUSS OVER YOU THE *SECOND* SHE'S IN THE DOOR. NOW LET'S CLEAN UP AND HIDE MISS CLAIBORNE'S WATCH. IF *GATOR* SEES IT, IT'LL NEVER GET TO HER!

NEIN, GATOR SHOULD WATCH OUT FOR *ME*, MY DEAR.

AH, ABIGAIL.. YOU GREW UP IN THE OLD COUNTRY.. LEARNED THE PROPER RESPECT FOR YOUR ELDERS.. BUT MY DAUGHTER.. MY ILSA...

...SHE DOES NOT CARE. SHE WILL NOT COME.

UH, LOOK, I'M SURE SHE'LL TRY TO BE HERE--

NOK NOK NOK

MR. JACOBSON?

JA? WER IST'S?

YOUR GUESTS.

...I TRUST YOU ARE PLEASED TO SEE THEM.

JA, JA. COME IN, THERE IS ROOM *FUER ALLES...*

FATHER, IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU--

UND ILSA? HAS SHE COME?

NEIN... ILSA KOMMT NICHT..

ABIGAIL? WE SHOULD LEAVE MR. JACOBSON AND HIS FAMILY ALONE DURING THEIR VISIT. WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

UH, SURE... BYE, FOLKS...

SHE THINKS OF THE HURT IN HIS FACE, THE TENSION BETWEEN THEM, AND WISHES SHE HADN'T LEFT HIM ALONE WITH THEM.

SHE THINKS THAT IF HE WERE HER FATHER, SHE WOULD...

SHE CAN'T.

HE'S GONE. HER FATHER HAS BEEN GONE FOR NEARLY FIFTEEN YEARS...

A FLEETING MEMORY, BARELY ABLE TO STIR...

...ERUPTING INTO A GLIMPSE OF THE NIGHTMARE...

...SHE PUSHES IT AWAY IN GUILT AND REVULSION...

HE HOLDS IT TENDERLY, NEVER LETTING GO...

(MY LITTLE ABBY, I'VE HURT YOU SOMEHOW...)

...SHE PUSHES THE THOUGHT DOWN ONLY TO HAVE IT SLIP FROM HER, MERCURIAL AND ELUSIVE, SUDDENLY CRYSTALIZING INTO THAT WHICH SHE RECOGNIZED... IT WAS...

D-DADDY?

...NEVER LETTING GO, OR HE'LL LOSE HER...

(I'VE HURT HER, MUST HELP HER, SAVE HER BEFORE I--)

IF HE LETS GO, THE GREEN MAN WILL TAKE HER AWAY...

(TAKE HER AWAY TO SAFETY, BEFORE I--)

...BEFORE SHE FALLS.

(--FALLS!--)

...THE GREEN MAN... HE TOOK HER AWAY...

(--TO SAFETY, MY ABBY IS SAFE--)

...THE GREEN MAN...

...ALEC...?

ABBY? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

ABIGAIL?

(WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU?)

I-I'M ALL RIGHT... REALLY, I AM...

TAKE IT SLOW, ABIGAIL. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE IT DOWNSTAIRS?

I...THINK SO...YEAH, I'LL BE FINE... OOOHHH...

I'LL BE DOWN MOMENTARILY TO BREW YOU SOME TEA... CAREFUL, NOW.

FOR A MOMENT SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS IN THE SWAMPS. SHE COULD SMELL THE DANK BLEND OF AIR-BORNE POLLEN AND STAGNANT WATER, NEAR THE HIGH-PITCHED SONG OF THE CICADA...

...AND THEN...

...SHE WAS BACK HERE.

CRICK

HERE, WHERE IT SMELLS OF DUST AND AGE, TINGED WITH THE STINK OF PERSPIRATION AND UNWASHED BEDPANS. HERE, AMIDST THE MURMURING SOUNDS OF LOST MEMORIES AND VACANT ECHOES.

THERE IS NOTHING HERE FOR HER.

SHE ACHES FOR THE SOLACE OF THE SWAMPS.

...ALEC AND THE SWAMPS.

KRAK

GATOR?

UH?

I, UH, FOUND HER LIKE THIS.. MUSTA HAD A *STROKE*... I WAS JUST, UH, CHECKIN' HER PULSE...

LOOK, SHE'S A GONER, BABY.. I GOTTA GO CALL AN AMBU-LANCE..

.. YOU FETCH MISSY CLAIBORNE, WOULDJA? LORDY, JUS' 'BOUT *EVERY-THING* THAT COULD BE WRONG IS WRONG T'DAY!

HIS NAME IS

(MY FINGERS FEEL BROKEN)

HIS NAME IS GREGORI, AND HE SITS WITH THE MORTAL REMAINS OF HIS BELOVED DAUGHTER, AND EVERYTHING THAT COULD BE WRONG IS WRONG.

D-DADDY?

(MY EYE, IT HURTS SO, I CAN'T FEEL MY LEGS...)

HE HAD ONCE SPOKEN TO HER, STANDING BEFORE THE FIREPLACE IN THEIR HOME, HER ANGELIC FACE INNOCENTLY ACCEPTING HIS EVERY WORD AS TRUTH

(I LIED TO HER AND I'VE KILLED HER!)

HE HAD SAID, "MAY YOU NEVER KNOW SORROW LITTLE ONE--

--AND MAY YOUR HEART ALWAYS BE AS FULL AS IT IS TODAY.

VERBOTTEN

D-DADDY? YOU'RE CRYING, DADDY... WHY ARE YOU CRYING, DADDY?

SHE MUSN'T SEE HIM LIKE THIS, MUSN'T SEE HIM IN SUCH PAIN... MUSN'T KNOW THE SORROW OF IT...

D-DADDY? D-DADDY? D-DADDY?

HE MUSN'T LET HER FEEL THE DESPAIR CONSUMING HIM...

(WHY DID I LET HER WANDER INTO THE MINEFIELDS?)

.SHE MUSN'T SEE HIM...

...NOT LIKE THIS...

(GOD, IT'S COME LOOSE, MY--

(--EYE--)

HE IS NOT GREGORI ARC--

(SAY IT! SCREAM IT!

ARCANE... HE IS WHAT HIS BROTHER HAS MADE HIM...

(WHY DID I WANDER INTO THE MINEFIELDS?)

...HE STEPPED ON A LIVE MINE AND HIS BROTHER ANTON...

(NO! IT HURTS! IT HURRRTISSS!)

OHHHHHH

ANTON MADE HIM WHAT HE IS...

(I...AM... DYING...)

A PATCHWORK MAN... AN UNRAVELING CRAZYQUILT OF FLESH...

D-DADDY? D-DADDY? D-DADDY?

(IAMDYING!AM DYING!AMDYING!!!)

HIS NAME IS NOT GREGORI ARCANE

(SHE CAN'T SEE ME LIKE THIS... NOOOOO--)

D-DADDY? D-DADDY?

HE IS THE PATCHWORK MAN AND HIS WORLD HAS GONE TO PIECES..

IT SCATTERS IN SHARDS AROUND HIS EARS, IT WRITHES LIKE A LIZARD'S TAIL IN THE BLOODIED CLAY BENEATH HIS FEET...

...GROPING...

...CLUTCHING...

...REACHING OUT...

AMY'S DEAD, I'M AFRAID. A HEART ATTACK... SORRY TO SAY, IT'S AN ALL TOO COMMON EVENT HERE

OH, GOD... HOW DO YOU STAND IT? I DON'T KNOW IF I --

ABIGAIL, I DON'T MEAN TO BE HARD ON YOU, BUT NEITHER HAVE I TIME TO MOLLYCODDLE. YOU. I ASSUMED WHEN YOU ACCEPTED YOUR POSITION HERE YOU *KNEW* HOW DIFFICULT IT MIGHT BE.

IF YOU ARE TO STAY ON, YOU MUST BE A■LE TO STAND IT! I'VE NO USE FOR YOU OTHERWISE.

YOU DON'T SEEM TO LIKE THE PATIENTS, AS IF IT WERE THEIR FAULT THEY ARE OLD AND NEED ATTENTION. IT'S EASY TO GET ALONG WITH THE LIKES OF TOWNCLOCK, BUT THAT ISN'T ENOUGH...

THEY *ALL* NEED CARE AND ACCEPTANCE.

I-IT'S HARD, WITH ALL THAT'S HAPPENED... LIZ LIVING WITH ME, SHE'S PRACTICALLY AN INVALID HERS --

I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, THOUGH IT'S REALLY NO BUSINESS OF MINE. YOU'VE WORKED WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN, AND WHEN DEANNA FRENCH GAVE SUCH GOOD REFERENCES, I'D HOPED--

IT'S *DIFFERENT* HERE!

IT'S NOT LIKE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AT *ALL!* THESE PEOPLE --

"*THESE PEOPLE*"-- PEOPLE LIKE YOUR PARENTS, PERHAPS? YOUR FATHER? WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO ACCEPT AND CARE FOR *HIM*, ABIGAIL?

I..

TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF, ABIGAIL, AND THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.

YAAA

GSAAAHHHN' LEMMEE GO YOU OL' SONUVA--

WAS WILLST DU DENN HE,R? CAUGHT MIT YOUR HAND IN THE COOKIE JAR, GATOR?

LEMMEE GO!

UNHK.

TOWNCLOCK!

THE OLD COOT HAD IT COMIN'! HIT ME WITH HIS DAMNED KRAUTSTICK!

YOU YOU WERE AFTER AMY'S RING THIS MORNING. AND NOW WHAT DO YOU WANT, MISS CLAIBORNE'S WATCH?

I CAUGHT HIM, FRAULEIN, STEALING FROM ME..

SHADDUP, YOU BITCH! YOU JUST KEEP IT SHUT!

GOTTA GET SOMETHIN' MORE THAN THE CRAP PAY WE GET TO SHUFFLE THESE STIFFS AROUND! SO'S I TAKE IT! SO SHUT UP!

SUPPOSIN' I TELL EVER'BODY JUST WHO YOU ARE?!! PERVERT!"

MAKIN' IT WITH BIGFOOT IN THE BAYOU! WHORE OF THE BEAST!"

SWAMP SLUT!

YA HEAR ME--

WE HEAR YOU, GATOR.

I HIRED ABIGAIL KNOWING EXACTLY WHO SHE WAS AND WHAT SHE'D DONE... WHO ARE YOU TO SPEAK ILL OF HER DEEDS?

THE PARAMEDICS ARE WITH POOR AMY NOW. THEY TELL ME HER FINGERS WERE BROKEN AFTER SHE'D SUCCUMBED TO THE STROKE

B-BROKE.. HER FINGERS?

GOD, NOOOO.

WHAT DID YOU TAKE FROM HER, GATOR?

TOWNCLOCK WALKS HER TO HER CAR, SOOTHING HER AS BEST HE CAN HIS VOICE, HIS TOUCH, THE WORDS OF COMFORT.. SHE CANNOT HELP BUT THINK OF HOW HER FATHER USED TO COMFORT HER IN THE SAME MANNER.

HE TELLS HER HIS GRANDSON FINDS HER ATTRACTIVE, AND THAT IF HE WERE A YOUNG MAN HIMSELF...

SOMEHOW, COMING FROM TOWNCLOCK, IT MAKES THINGS WORSE.

A PHONE MESSAGE CAME FROM CHESTER WILLIAMS. SHE HADN'T SEEN HIM SINCE THE FUNERAL.

SHE WOULD CALL HIM AS SOON AS SHE GOT HOME, THEN SHE WOULD FIX DINNER FOR LIZ. SHE HADN'T DECIDED WHETHER LIVING WITH LIZ WAS BETTER THAN LIVING ALONE. THE WOMAN REMAINED UTTERLY HELPLESS.

AFTER SHE FED LIZ, SHE WOULD GO OUT.

OUT TO THE SWAMPS.

HE LAY NEXT TO A MOCKERY OF RAGS AND PAPER, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SAW IT FOR WHAT IT WAS. IF ONLY HE COULD LAUGH.

HE IS THE PATCHWORK MAN, AND HE IS DYING.

HE IS... COMING APART.

SHE NO LONGER CALLED OUT TO HIM, WHICH WAS GOOD. HE DIDN'T WANT HER TO SEE HIM LIKE THIS. HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE A BURDEN TO HER.

SHE CALLED CHESTER AFTER PREPARING SUPPER FOR LIZ.

A SWAMP MONSTER? IN TEXAS!

ABOUT 25 MILES OVER THE BORDER IN THE BAYOUS. TWO KIDS SAW IT THIS MORNING, AND THERE'S BEEN SIGHTINGS IN THE SAME AREA OVER THE PAST MONTH!

I'VE GOT THREE FRIENDS WHO'LL GO WITH US.

BY THE TIME THE RAIN STOPPED HE KNEW WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.

HE WAS VERY TIRED, BUT IT HAD TO BE.

BY 10:30 THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY.

LOOK, ABBY, I DON'T WANT TO GET YOUR HOPES UP

HE WOULD MAKE HIS OWN BED. DIG HIS OWN GRAVE.

HE WOULD PUT ALL OF HIS FLESH INTO IT.

...AND HE WOULD SLEEP..

HEY, YOU SURE THIS IS IT? MAYBE WE SHOULD GO TALK TO THOSE TWO KIDS AND MAKE SURE. MAYBE EVEN SHOW US THEMSELVES...

ABBY, IT'S 2:30 IN THE MORNING. YOU CAN'T GO WAKING PEOPLE FOR THIS SORT OF THING...

BUT, LOOK, SHOULDN'T WE BE *SURE*... WHAT IF IT *IS* ALEC? I MEAN--

COOL YER JETS! LOOK, IT MAY NOT BE ALEC, IT PROBABLY ISN'T. LET'S SPLIT UP AND COVER AS MUCH GROUND AS WE CAN.

MARK YOUR PATHS... MEET BACK HERE IN TWO HOURS, MAX.

MAN, I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT THIS. SHE'S A LITTLE TOO INTENSE.

SHE CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF. BUT, I SORTA WISH I'D NEVER CALLED HER... JUST THOUGHT...

IT ISN'T A PROPER BED, REALLY, BUT IT WILL DO.

(SO...TIRED... MY EYE...SO SORE...)

HIS HAND IS LITTLE MORE THAN A SPADE OF FLESH, HIS KNEES WORN RAW, HIS JOINTS SPLINTER WITH EVERY MOTION...

SOON, TO REST, TO SLEEP.

DARE HE LIFT HIS BELOVED LITTLE GIRL IN HIS ARMS.

(A BONE. .FROM MY FOREARM... DANGLES BY A STRING OF MUSCLE...)

AND CARRY HER TO BED?

SHE SAYS HER PRAYERS. ASKING GOD TO BLESS EVEN UNCLE ANTON.

(WHERE ARE YOU, ANTON? PUT ME...BACK...)

BEFORE HE LAY HER UNDER THE COVERS

(...TOGETHER..)

AND SHE KISSES HIS CHEEK

(...MY PITTED CHEEK...)

AND ASKS FOR A LULLABY.

WILL YOU SING TO ME, DADDY?

I'M GETTING BETTER AT IT.. LISTENING TO THE SWAMP.

NOT LIKE YOU OF COURSE, BUT SOMETIMES I CAN HEAR ITS WHISPERINGS, ITS SONGS...

...AND I PRAY IT IS YOU I'M HEARING..

...A FAINT GURGLING, ABOVE THE SEETHING RUSTLE OF REEDS, BETWEEN THE BASS CHORUS OF BULLFROGS AND SOPRANO TWITTERING OF THE PEEPERS. IT ALMOST CARRIES A FAMILIAR MELODY..

I AM COMING.

I FOLLOW THE LISTLESS GURGLING TO ITS SOURCE, HOPING IT WILL SOMEHOW BETRAY YOUR RESURRECTION..

I CAN REMEMBER FINDING YOU EATEN BY RADIATION, CROAKING IN THE DARKNESS.. AN INFANT YAM WITH THE VOICE OF A CARTOON CHARACTER.. HOW HOPELESS IT SEEMED THEN...

BUT AS I SEE THE WIDE, MOSS-PEPPERED FIGURE KNEELING IN THE DARKNESS, AND WHISPER YOUR NAME--

ALEC?

--I KNOW YOU ARE STILL GONE.

AND YET--

THE HUSHED GURGLING STOPS JUST AS I BEGIN TO MAKE SENSE OF IT. AS IT TURNS, THERE IS A MOIST SNAPPING OF UNWILLING LIMBS AND A FLURRY OF FLIES DISTURBED FROM THEIR FEEDING

I KNOW IT FROM MY NIGHTMARES.

W-WAIT--

I...KNOW WHAT IT IS...

WHOA!

THAT'S WHEN IT BEGAN TO RAIN.

STILL, I COULD HEAR IT...

SOB GURGLE

..ABOVE MY OWN SOBBING.

D-DADDY?

D-DADDY?

(I..AM...GREGOR!?)

RUN, RUN AWAY, HE'S DYING, OH GOD IT CAN'T BE--

(...MY ABBY...)

(NOOOOOOOOOO!)

NOOOOOOO, THIS.. CAN'T...BE...

THE WET STENCH OF DEATH MELTS INTO MEMORIES OF SCOTCH AND TOBACCO SHE COULD SMELL WHEN HE HELD HER AS A LITTLE GIRL... AND FOR A MOMENT, ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT HE IS HER FATHER, SHE IS HIS DAUGHTER, AND THEY ARE REUNITED...

COME HOME WITH ME, DADDY, COME HOME--

(I AM GREGORI ARCANE, HOLDING MY DEAREST BLOOD-OF-MY-BLOOD--)

--I'LL MAKE IT BETTER SOMEHOW, I'LL BE BETTER--

(-- I AM STRONG FOR HER, I WILL COMFORT HER, SHELTER HER FROM THE CRUELTIES OF THIS WORLD, I WILL PROTECT YOU, MY LITTLE ABBY--)

--OH IT'S BEEN SO HARD, SO CRUEL, BUT I'VE BEEN STRONG DADDY, I'VE BEEN THE BEST I CAN BE--

(--FOREVER YOUR FATHER--)

--CAN'T YOU SEE? I'VE MISSED YOU, NEEDED YOU SO--

(--FOREVER MY DAUGHTER--LET ME HOLD YOU--)

--THEY KILLED YOU, DADDY, THEY KILLED ALEC, KILLED EVERYONE, EVERYTHING I'VE EVER LOVED--

(--I LOVE YOU--)

--MY FATHER--

HE IS GREGORI ARCANE, AND HE BATHES IN HIS LOVE FOR HER, HER LOVE FOR HIM, RUNNING HIS FINGERS OVER HER HAIR...

(--FINGERLESS, ACHING STUMP--)

--DADDY, WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME IT WOULD BE SO HARD -- WHY DID YOU GO AND LEAVE ME ALONE?--

(-- I AM WHAT MY BROTHER -- HAS MADE ME--)

--ALONE WITH SO MUCH SORROW--

(--SHE--CANNOT--SEE ME--)

(--LIKE THIS--)

RRRRIIIP

AHHH

SHE KNEELS IN THE TORRENTIAL RAINS, REELING, BEFORE CRYING OUT AND FOLLOWING HIM...

SHE SEES HIS LEG GIVE WAY, AND A FLEETING GLIMPSE OF A SPINDLY FIGURE; ITS HEAD IMPOSSIBLY AKIMBO, BEFORE LOSING HIM IN THE DOWNPOUR...

THEN IT BEGAN TO RAIL...

CHESTER WILLIAMS AND FRIENDS WAITED AT THE CAR UNTIL DAWN, THEN SET OUT IN SEARCH OF ABBY

THE RAINS AND POUNDING HAIL MADE FOLLOWING HER TRAIL INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT.

BUT EVENTUALLY, IT BECAME ALL TOO APPARENT...

.. ACCOMPANIED BY A DISTANT LULLABY...

...THEY MOVE TOWARD IT'S MOURNFUL TUNE OF LOVE LOST...

...A FINAL CHILDLIKE SONG OF ENDLESS SLEEP.

zzzzzz

A-ABBY.. WHO--

CHESTER YOU'VE GOT TO *HELP* ME, CHESTER

...I CAN'T FIND *MY* FATHER'S HEAD, CHESTER... HIS HEAD IS GONE...

...THE HAIL... HE.. FELL APART..AND...

...I CAN'T FIND HIS HEAD...

SUCH A *NIT* YOU ARE, ANTON, SUCH A REMARKABLE FELLOW TO STILL BE CAUSING *PAIN* ON THE EARTHLY PLANE SO LONG AFTER HAVING LEFT IT YOURSELF.

YOUR POOR NIECE, SHE'LL *NEVER* GET *AHEAD*...

AH-HA HA

GET IT? AHEAD?

HAHAHAHA

WHY, YOU'VE *MISAIMED* ME, ANTON! I REALLY SHALL HAVE TO DEVISE SOME *REWARD* FOR YOUR PARTICULAR BRAND OF VILE BEHAVIOR.

SHALL I TURN YOU OVER TO THE BRAIN WORMS AGAIN? THE IODINE PITS? ANOTHER LAME *PLAN*, PERHAPS?

WELL, ANTON... THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU. NOTHING TO SAY? NOTHING AT *ALL*?

:UN-MUK:

I... *HURT* HER...

:GOSP:

HAHAHAHA

ENOUGH! THERE IS NO TRIUMPH IN THIS *MOMENT* FOR *YOU*, ARCANE! LAUGH IF YOU CAN!!

LET AN OCEAN OF DEMONS ENGULF YOU!

LET THE GAMES COMMENCE.

HAHAHA

INCREDIBLE...

HAHAHAHAHA

UNREPENTANT TO THE END, HE'LL BE.

MAY BE PROPER DEMON MATERIAL, MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT...

ONCE HIS DEBT IS PAID.

"He was soon borne away by the waves and lost in the darkness and distance." -MARY SHELLEY, *FRANKENSTEIN*

NEXT: LOVING THE ALIEN

BRAND NEW FORMAT! SPECIAL PRICE!

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NEW FORMAT

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

By ALAN MOORE & JOHN TOTLEBEN

"Quiet, my small. Still your tongue.
Space is all. Space is cold.
You are warm. You are young.
Space is old. Sleep and form.
Sleep and form."

No?

Still awake then?

Does my sleepsong not charm the thoughts from your minds and pour them away into the great-black-outside-that-is-everything? O, little ones, I am tired and the blood and ore move sluggishly within me, but you: You are awake and restless in your pods. Slick with warm oil your cogs and capillaries prick me as you move.

What disturbs you? Is it the Dream-Drones that flutter by your cradles, feeding you their cool nectar of intelligence, the chemo-structure of each gleaming bead encoded with an ocean of knowledge? Their narrow beaks drip algebra, cybotany and a cascade of excellent languages. Surely they do not keep you from slumber?

Is it the light? Shall I increase the number of facets in my optic canopy and shred its brilliance still finer?

Is it my voice? Should I remaster its twelve layers, peeling back the subsonics?

No.

No, it is not the drones or the light or my crooning that keep you from your gentle oblivion.

You are waiting

You are waiting for me to tell the story . . .

. . . of the seed that came across the great-black-outside-that-is-everything, issue of no loins save the Cosmos . . .

. . . of the ghost that swam through clock-work and was raped by an island . . .

Very well. I shall tell you . . .

I shall show you.

See: Pulses of sharpened light stream down my fibers to your sleepless lense piecing together a photo-electric jigsaw, a phosphor-dot mosaic of his divine countenance . . .

. . . that we shall worship and adore 'til all the suns are cinders.

SWAMP THING

CREATED BY LEN WEIN AND BERNI WRIGHTSON

Loving the Alien

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My story began when the stars were one-tenth of a turn from their current location, and that is a considerable while.

Drowsing in my pod while mother's drones drooled liquid data, I felt my brothers' minds shifting in the chambers beyond my own. Their maleness, their otherness, it excited me, but my mother the island gently chided her only daughter:

"Not yet," she said. "Wait", she said.

"Wait, and you too shall be an island, your brothers as dust-motes by comparison. Wait, and when you are grown I shall launch you all into The Great-Black-Outside-That-Is-Everything. Perhaps one of your kin will find you again; or perhaps those fierce boy-seeds will swim across the blackness to woo some other island's only daughter, just as one of that island's man's sons might come to you, propelling itself through the dark aether with its splendid silver tail.

"Then you will know the ecstasy and the great heat of fusion with one whose flesh is as your own. You will know that melancholy pride which comes with your first pods: Glass bulbs at first; smooth and cold; softened by the fungoid circuity that swiftly covers them.

"You will know then what it is to be loved, and to be a mother.

"Until then, you must wait.

"Wait."

And I waited.

After some time, I was expelled from my mother's womb of iron and cellulose, spat far into the Great-Black-Outside-That-Is-Everything to await my first lover.

And I waited.

And I waited.

The stars turned by degrees, but no suitors came save those biologically incapable of quenching the longing within me: Alien wayfarers of a myriad different species, perhaps one in a thousand comprehending what it was that he burrowed within. They came, beings made of intelligent ice and creatures fashioned from white sticks and red fibers. They came in loud and smoldering chariots or poured their atoms down beams of blue light.

Some took me for a planet, an unclaimed solar satellite that they might strip the ore from or infest with the overspill of their populations.

Some, perceiving the intricacy of my cyberstructure, concluded that I was perhaps a ship, a giant engine of war that could be tamed and turned upon their enemies.

All of them perished, their chariots and their corpses ground between the gears of a biological process incomprehensible to them, slaughtered by lumbering metal antibodies.

Their flesh was not as mine. I could not fuse with them.

From their remains I abstracted what minerals I could, absorbing them into my own mass. That which I could not ingest decomposes yet within my endless intestinal passageways.

And I wept for them, and for myself

And I waited.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

There in the lonely dark, fear gnawed upon me: Had my race grown fewer across the billennia so that no boy-seeds remained to find me? Had my own brothers perished, searching hopelessly for another island that no longer existed? I ground my continents together in a terrible, bitter frustration. I begged whatever forces there might be that I should not drift for an eternity never knowing love, never knowing fusion, and I waited for their reply.

And I waited.

When my remote sensor globes, afloat in the distant nothingness, relayed to me their first impressions of the life form entering my proximity, I recalled the aliens whose mortal fragments were forever lost within me, and I was not moved.

And yet . . .

. . . and yet there seemed something curious and rare in that swirling pattern of energies, some fascinating singularity. Visually, no physical form could be perceived, no roaring alien craft approaching, and yet my needles danced and trembled in their dials as they recorded each pulse, each fierce surge of its extra-ordinary vitality.

A blazing star that burned on no visible spectrum, it swam towards me across the Great-Black-Outside-That-Is-Everything.

Upon my hide, a hundred Geysers were silenced and a thousand streams ran dry as I held my breath.

Cheated by this invisible interloper my optic display rippled with mad lights, an agitated brilliance that flashed from screen to screen finding nothing, while all the time I felt that spectral fireball crackling nearer, nearer, white hot and spitting . . .

At the moment of impact a shockwave of foreign sounds and images rang through my being and in that startling, concussive instant I caught the briefest mental glimpse of the invader.

It was symmetrical, its optic canopies two burning wounds in the darkness of their surround. Beneath that, its features were a jumble of indecipherable organs and components for which I had no name. And yet those eyes, those eyes transfixed me, skewered me with their intensity, their great passion . . .

The vision faded almost before it had formed, the intelligence behind it entering the rootclusters and cogs and deep cables of my substance like grounded lightning.

Almost subliminally I noted that there was a fold in the fabric of time at this juncture, and knew that some point in my future would find me performing a chronofracture, but this minor revelation was driven from my mind as my probes grasped blindly for some tangible evidence of the intruder.

There was none.

The intruder possessed no body. He was a ghost.

A ghost that swam through clockwork.

Confused, grasping at the quicksilver intelligence with a clumsy fist of neural receptors, I felt again the cold splash of an alien consciousness as its surface thoughts and buried memories washed over me . . .

Buried deeper were darker countenances that had only phobic associations: A half-arachnid form, its one eye filled with depravity; a snarling, feral organism emerging from the skin of another female; a pale and bloodless infant feeding upon its own mother while an aquatic monstrosity looks on hungrily . . .

The faces merged, flowing hypnotically, and when I felt the first twitchings of physical activity within me, I scarcely recognized them.

My cables, unbidden, knotted themselves into tendons.

My cybernetic mosses, wrested from my control, molded themselves into a strange and glittering medium that was not unlike flesh.

The ghost was growing a body, a sentient tumor from the substance of my own.

Nine of my twelve vocal strata rose to the ultrasonic as I began to scream.

And the ghost screamed with me.

From the panic and disorientation that clattered from his mind it was evident that the form he found himself incarnated within was no shape that he had ever anticipated or conceived of.

The slatted vents of my photo-synthetic reactors cast rolling hyphens of colored highlight across the glass exo-skull blossoming from his shoulders . . .

Charting a fluorescent map of the entity's brain I saw creatures like my earlier vision of this insubstantial stranger, and yet NOT like him. They were made of red things, he of green. Foremost was a presence whose upper extremity was shrouded by a mass of white strands. Experiencing a powerful erotic impulse, albeit vicariously, I wondered if this could be the female of the species.

. . . Glinted from the slowly rotating watchworks of a nipple . . .

. . . Sparkled upon the articulated hypodermics of his talons like the rapid, coded speech of signal lanterns . . .

Fully formed now, he twisted and writhed in the striped light, a fabulous and agonized metal sculpture suddenly made animate.

He was beautiful.

He was other.

He was of my flesh.

How shall I say it? How to describe the effect this last bare fact worked in me? He was of my flesh.

I was melted by the implications.

Yes . . . yes, that is it!

"Melted."

Not for my body, that was not melted save for the unchanging magma, boiling ceaselessly around my nuclear core. Not my body, but rather my mind; my psychstructure; my self. My self is what melted.

All the precisely indexed data, sucked greedily from the computer systems of a thousand doomed alien vessels; all my art and science and neurosynthesis; the logarithms and sines; the very formula of what I am . . .

Melted.

It was as if all the electric vapor of my knowledge had condensed, distilled itself back into that trickling nectar that my mother's drones had fed me in the pod.

In my rapture, all my numbers became liquid; I confess I quite forgot the intruder, further to this, I forgot also to stop screaming.

Confused and physically discomforted by my ultrasonics, he ran; lost within a brass honeycomb of service ducts before I could recover myself.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

It took only instants for me to triangulate his vitality signals, but by then he had reached the central knot of a transportation matrix used by my maintenance-drones. From the eye of this gigantic and abstract web, spatial wormholes bored their various ways to the ultimate reaches of my body . . .

The icefields of my breast.

The whirlpool-haunted ocean of my brow and the desert of my belly . . .

Peeling back lids of circuit-laced cellulose from the photosensitive steel of new eyes, he watched in terror; in fascination as my drones dug finger-skewers of white gold into the soft plantflesh of their abdomens, cold hands glistening wet, groping amongst their intestines to reset, recalibrate, alter coordinates before entering the pulsing aperture of their choice and vanishing, simply vanishing.

Hoping to recapture him while he stood rooted with incomprehension, I extended eager magnetic digits with rippling fingerprints; tendrils that reached, snatched at him, were too slow . . .

In his retreat from the clutching, shimmering fields of force he stepped into a wormhole and was gone, tumbling without coordinates towards a random destination . . .

I hoped it was not the magma, or, worse yet, the core.

Scanning frantically, blinking eyes like huge frozen ponds, I located his point of exit from the matrix : A service junction on my outermost rind, a false gravity zone. Upon emerging from the wormhole he floundered helplessly, a strange chrome fish thrashing upon an asylum beachhead with no up; no down.

Beneath him, above him, beside him the aerial panorama of a cryptic mechopolis tilted and spun :

The green-tinted roofscape of my hydroponic complex, straining the light of distant suns onto the flowerbeds below, where tin roses with foil petals turned their iridescent, petrol-colored heads, following the light . . .

The pulsating domes and miniature street-illuminations of my drone-cities, where the automata paraded in purposeful silence . . .

A lake of bright mercury in which the dark vanes of adjacent solar windmills hung reflected in still, deep quicksilver . . .

. . . and rearing above, beneath, beside it all, the solemn, ticking colossus of a Time Tower, registering the flux of gravity and regulating the subsequent distortions of regional time.

Across the great pool of mercury a skin-parasite fluttered, lazily, one stained glass wingtip idly slicing the lake's surface yet leaving no scar in the heavy, silver fluid. Scenting the defenseless intruder, adrift in his freefall bedlam, it glided towards him, whisker-filaments twitching thirstily.

He prepared to jump, to abandon his new flesh, his new world, to abandon me, to leave me alone again . . .

I could not permit that.

It was narrowly timed.

He had already given up his body, reassuming the untouchable mantle of his ghost-form, and if my move were delayed by even an instant, his intelligence would be gone: Parsecs away in a single beat of my atom heart.

I could not, would not lose him now.

I performed a chronofracture.

The time tower supplied all the data necessary to make the incision . . . the stress points in the chronic flux, the places where I could exert gentle pressure, carefully tearing through the skin of time so that I might surgically alter and reset its bones.

As the timewound opened, even the intruder's ethereal form could not escape the howling draft of the tachyon wind, screaming through the aperture and out of that moment, into another . . .

It sucked him shrieking in its wake, out through the rent in the flimsy curtain separating now from then . . .

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

. . . before from after.

Neatly tying the loose ends of self-fulfilling prophecy into the unfathomable knot of paradox, I deposited the intruder back at the point where I had noted the chronofracture earlier.

Caught by surprise in an event-loop, the staggered and barely-conscious intelligence once more sizzled down through my stratosphere while bewildered lights danced across my displays, searching for a visible form when there was none.

Everything went as before: The shock of impact, the almost subliminal first glimpse of his features, the eerie moment when he revealed himself as a phantom, diving bodiless into the cold, oil-scented sea of clockwork, seeking refuge in a fresh-grown body . . .

Everything went as before . . .

. . . except for the part I altered.

Everything went as before . . .

. . . except that this time I was waiting for him.

In the Timetowers the needles convulsed once as I performed the chronofracture breaking the bones of time with exquisite care and subtlety.

My cables, unbidden, knotted themselves into tendons, just as before.

My scintillating mosses became flesh, just as before . . .

After that, everything was different.

His tumor-body wrenched itself free from my cyberloam, snapped wires trailing like ganglia, a rain of microchip soil falling as he uprooted himself, preparing to run . . .

He was too late.

My engines were already surrounding him, presenting faceless walls of frictionless steel, big and indifferent as buildings. A moving city of metal slid towards him, confining him.

Poor thing, that couched his perception of love and lust in such soft and curvilinear imagery, could he comprehend the tenderness in the hard geometric embrace tightening upon him?

I like to think so.

In the blind facade, panels hissed open, leaking steam, and viscous pearls of scented oil trembled on the dilated lips of shutters. From these openings, tongues of thick cable darted, artificial light glinting violet on their lubricated steel jacketing.

One found the intruder's ankle, one a thigh, yet another his shoulder and a fourth his wrist.

As triple- jointed arms of filligree platinum unfolded themselves from niches in the advancing walls and stretched inquiringly towards him, he could not move. His entire being; his strange and singular existence rested wholly upon my whim, was at my disposal. For those moments I owned his life and his death and I loved him for that.

The platinum arm opened its fist and flexed scalpel fingers.

The first cut opened him from throat to abdomen.

He began to gasp and shake, the cables that tied him creaking with the strain. He tried to absent himself from that body, but the shieldfields projected by my monolithic engines kept him caged there, unable to escape, unable to defend himself.

How glorious he was as the pain grasped him by the base of the spine and shook him so that his upper body lashed back and forth in its bonds, the same intoxicating courtship movements that my mother had described in my own father, who, of course, I had never known.

Priceless fingers began to peel away the metal epidermis, pinning the gleaming flaps back with beads of solder, exposing the soft gray plant flesh beneath, small clamps tightening upon the lips of the wound.

The noise that he made was distracting, and might perhaps have spoiled the intimate and romantic ambience of our impending union. Therefore, I modulated my voice and commenced an audial loop of soothing sound-patterns with subsonics that charmed and stupefied the recipient.

After a few moments the screams became low moans and he grew limp upon the torture-harp of wire that held him, hanging in submission, his struggles becoming gradually less frequent as concealed speakers whispered their anaesthetic love songs.

The principal engine moved upon slick bearings into an appropriate position, and as the first stroke of the cylinder heads drove home he threw back his glass-bubble head, and was never more lovely than at that moment.

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

Fine-bore needles of hollow diamond, entering through his gaping scream, struck upwards through the roof of his mouth to fill the cranial cavity with acid. His dissolved brain, in suspension, was then drawn off by the same needles, the stamp of his unique intelligence etched upon each molecule.

At the same time, my cold steel hands worked deep inside his chest, seeking those glands that would become engorged with vital enzymes during this time of unrelenting pain and terror. I liquefied his spine and neural cortex, siphoning the resultant soup away down midnight gulleys and arteries of glass deep within me.

I drank the wine of his intelligence, drank his body; the pattern of his cells. I ate his fear, I ate his agony, I ate his love, his love, his love . . .

The rest I threw away.

Unraveling, the body tumbled down my center-well past level after level, each strata more cryptic than the one before.

He fell past the tubes of tinted crystal that were already sluicing his codes and his chemicals towards the vats below, where they were analyzed, synthesized and mass produced, channeled along the uterine duct system to be sprayed across my ova-orchards in a fine and fertile mist . . .

He fell past the great industries of my reproductive process, his corpse unwinding into an ungainly tangle of root and wire as his consciousness withdrew . . .

He fell past the depthless secrets of my entire race and their procreation, to him an unreadable manuscript illuminated by fabulous and baffling illustrations . . .

Your transparent pods hung trembling from my iron stems amongst the spiny husks of older and unfertilized eggs, gleaming wet and triumphant and alive amongst those dry, dead failures.

Some of the pods had rapidly acquired their fur of circuitry, twittering drones already floating towards them with cheeks puffed out and mouths full of genius.

In the hothouse of my womb, children were blossoming. You were blossoming.

The ghost fell through the whispering, pre-natal twilight, a landscape we recall only in our saddest dreams, and then with a wrench he tore his intelligence free of his dismantled flesh and was gone.

In his time with me, I know not what he saw or how much he understood of it.

If he understood that he was loved, that would be enough . . .

. . . and yet, if he could have lingered, if he could have looked beyond those chip-encrusted pod walls and seen you as I see you now, this cross-section image that coalesces from the phosphordots, ricocheting amongst the latticed rods and cones of my retinal plate . . .

If he could have seen you, the delicate main-springs of your tiny spines, the infinitesimal cortical clockwork. If he could have seen you, would he see any facet of himself reflected? The darkness of your eyes, perhaps, so like his own? The curve of your shoulders, not yet born and already weary with the world?

Would he have allowed himself to see these things, have confessed to the slightest inherited resemblance?

Could he have loved these lukewarm and peculiar little creatures; these fetal bio-automata; you; his children?

Could your father have loved you?

Yes.

Yes, in time. I am certain of it . . .

. . . but he had to go away.

Away into the great-black-outside-that-is-everything, continuing with his interrupted, imponderable quest towards an unguessable destination.

My surface lenses tracked the burning green star of his disincarnate intelligence as it sparked up through the thin perfume of my atmosphere. My orbiting monitor globes tracked his cometary into the blackness with eyes that saw far beyond the merely visible, watching unblinkingly until he was gone from all perception . . .

. . . and that is the story, my small ones, of how a barren island called upon the forces that be to end her loneliness, and how the universe responded by delivering to her the succor of a ghost. That is the story of the grand miracle, of the mother whose children were conceived of no tangible father, flesh of no flesh save her own.

You drift and dream, waiting to enter the world, progeny of an invisible god. Your legend will resound down the billennia amongst our kind. Awaiting your glorious coming, I tremble.

Soon, you will be grown, ready to be flung out amongst the unfriendly stars. Already I feel the slow chain reaction escalating by degrees within my nuclear core. When the day is come, the force of my explosion will catapult you deep into the void and your separate destinies, and in that final, white-hot instant I shall be glad, fulfilled beyond all measure.

I knew my fate from the first, my mother's fate before me, that fate sealed by love. It is a universal truth, known to the humblest protozoa: Sex is death. The two are ever intertwined . . .

. . . but you need not think of such things now. The fires of your nativity are still some years away, and for that time of gestation I shall be with you. The fires of your adolescence, though fiercer, are more distant still.

The future will take care of itself. For the present, your mother is old, your mother is tired. Her rivers are barely strong enough to struggle downstream. She must rest now.

Just rest.

Quiet, my small. Still your tongue.

"Space is all, Space is cold
You are warm. You are young.
Space is old. Sleep and form . . .

"Sleep and form."

NEXT: ALL FLESH IS GRASS

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THE HORROR WAS COMING ACROSS THE STARS.

J.586:

THE LANDLORD TREES OF THE GIANT BANYAN COMPLEX STAND MOTIONLESS, ARMS GROWING INTO EACH OTHER'S SHOULDERS, LISTENING TO THE RESIDENTS LIVING IN THEIR BELLIES.

THE BANYANS, HEARING ALL THAT OCCURS WITHIN THEM, REPEAT NOTHING.

IN A SUBLIMELY FURNISHED HOLLOW THAT THEY LEASE UPON THE NINTH LEVEL, DESIRA AND LOCLISS MATE BEHIND SCREENS OF PAINTED SKIN TO AVOID EMBARRASSING THE ROOM.

IDEALLY MATCHED, PAINFULLY IN LOVE, THEY ARE SURELY THE PERFECT COUPLE.

LOCLISS WORKS IN OLFACTORY DECORATION. DESIRA MANAGES A CHEMICAL RESTAURANT. COME FALL, THEY HOPE TO MARRY BEFORE A PRIEST OF O.

FERTILIZATION ACCOMPLISHED, THEY DISENGAGE WITH TENDERNESS, IF IN GREAT CARE.

DRESSING, LOCLISS PULLS ON HIS PICKLED GOWN; DESIRA HER SHIRT OF ALBINO HAIR. BOTH SAVOR THE INAPPROPRIATE SHYNESS THAT FALLS BETWEEN THEM.

PAINTED SCREENS ARE ROLLED STRAIGHT AWAY. DIPLOMATICALLY, THE ROOM ASKS IF THEIR SLEEP WAS ENJOYABLE.

THEY NOD, EXCHANGING GLANCES, AND THE BANYAN SMILES INDULGENTLY. THEY STEP THROUGH ITS SMILE INTO THE SULTRY AFTERNOON.

ON THE BRANCHWAY, RUSTLING CROWDS STROLL IN SLANTED SUNLIGHT. THOSE ENTWINED, THE LOVERS SHUFFLE LAUGHING TO JOIN THEM.

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THE HORROR WAS COMING ACROSS THE STARS, INVISIBLE AND WITHOUT A BODY, AN INTANGIBLE KNOT OF MEMORIES, THOUGHTS, IMPULSES...

FOREMOST AMONGST THESE WAS THE HORROR'S URGE TO REACH ITS DESTINATION, THE NAME IT CHASED THROUGH NAMELESS DARKNESS:

J586

THE GALLERY HOLLOW ON LEVEL SEVEN IS CAVERNOUS, ECHO-HAUNTED.

SHURLO THE FLESH-ARTIST GLIDES THROUGH AN ADORING FOREST OF HER ADMIRERS, HALF-HEARTEDLY ANSWERING QUESTIONS, ACKNOWLEDGING COMPLIMENTS.

A STOUT CONIFER WEARING AN EXPENSIVE FEATHER FACE ASKS HER TO EXPLAIN AN ARRANGEMENT OF DYED MEATS.

SHURLO TELLS HER THAT IT REPRESENTS SOCIAL INTEGRATION, AND THE CONIFER SEEMS SATISFIED.

MERCIFUL O, HOW THEY BORE HER.

SHE WONDERS IF THIS IS THE PRICE EXACTED FOR CRITICAL ACCLAIM; TO BE ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY THIS FATUOUS, WELL-MEANING THICKET, CROWDED UNTIL SHE FEELS ROOTBOUND?

TO BE ALONE. IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?

EXHIBIT TEN: COLORED FISH, INGENIOUSLY GRAFTED INTO SYMMETRICAL CLUSTERS. THEY WILL SURVIVE THE EXHIBITION, JUST BARELY.

LOW IN THE SKY BEYOND THE GALLERY WINDOW, MINRAUD IS SILVER AND GORGEOUS.

DECIDING, SHURLO SLIPS OUT BEFORE ANYONE NOTICES.

ALONG THE BRANCHWAY MOVE CREAKING ANCIENTS, PROUD MOTHERS HEAVY WITH FRUIT, YOUNG SAPLINGS DISPLAYING THEIR FASHIONABLE TOPIARY...

HER RELIEF ALLOYED CURIOUSLY WITH AN OBSCURE DISAPPOINTMENT, THE GREAT ARTIST WALKS AMONGST THE COMMON HERD UNRECOGNIZED.

THE HORROR DRAWING CLOSER, RECALLED TWIN SUNS AND WORDS OF HOPE...

...RECALLED ANOTHER PLACE, NEITHER VEGETABLE NOR MINERAL, AND THE HUMILIATIONS SUFFERED THERE...

PUTTING ASIDE WHERE IT HAD BEEN, THE HORROR CONCENTRATED SOLELY UPON WHERE IT WAS GOING.

"I LOOK UPON THE GAPING NOTHINGNESS AND I SEE O.
I COUNT THE RINGS OF MY EXPERIENCE, AND IN EACH I SEE O.
I WITNESS THE CIRCULARITY OF ALL THINGS, AND O IS REVEALED IN THEM"

IMREL, SERVANT OF GOD, STANDS ABOVE THE CONGREGATION AND MOVES HIS MOUTH HE CANNOT BRING HIMSELF TO VOICE THE HYMN:

"I GAZE INTO THE EYE OF MY FELLOW CREATURE, AND O IS THERE..."

IMREL NO LONGER BELIEVES THIS.

THE SANNEY OF WORSHIPPERS IS DISAPPOINTINGLY SMALL, AND IN THEIR EYES IMREL SEES ONLY CONCEALED PETTINESS, HIDDEN LUST AND GREED.

WHERE? WHERE IS O WHO MADE THE SUNS AND PLANETS IN HIS IMAGE?

NOT THERE. NOT IN THOSE EYES.

THE SERVICE ENDS, THE WORSHIPPERS LEAVE.

FILING PAST HIM, DO THEY NOT SEE HIS DESPAIR? DO THEY NOT COMPREHEND THE FATHOMLESS, FAITHLESS OCEAN IN WHICH HE DROWNS?

MUMBLING ENDLESS PERFUNCTORY FAREWELLS, IMREL DECIDES TO STOP LIVING.

HE WILL HURL HIMSELF FROM THE HEIGHTS OF THE BANYAM COMPLEX, SHATTERING INTO SPLINTERS.

DELIBERATING, HE WATCHES THE PROCESSION ASCEND THE SPIRAL RAMPS

...THEN, SERVANT OF AN ABSENT GOD, HE FALLS INTO STEP WITH THE SHUFFLING DAMNED

THE HORROR WAS ALMOST THERE.

SINGLE-MINDED, IT KNEW ONLY THE NEARNESS OF ITS DESTINATION, ITS SALVATION.

IT DID NOT KNOW HOW FAR IT HAD TRAVELED. IT DID NOT EVEN KNOW THAT IT WAS A HORROR...

BUT IT WAS.

IN HIS CAVE OF DEAF METAL, FAR FROM THE LISTENING BANYANS, GREAT MEDPHYL SITS VIGIL OVER HIS MENTOR'S WITHERING REMAINS.

DEAR JOTHRA. HE'D GIVE HIS RING TO WALK BESIDE HIM IN AMIABLE SILENCE, JUST ONCE MORE.

BUT JOTHRA IS GONE.

AND WHAT OF MEDPHYL? WITHOUT HIS TEACHER'S ADVICE, IS MEDPHYL GONE ALSO? THE PEOPLE SAY HE HAS GROWN TOO OLD TO DEFEND THEM: "ONE RING TOO MANY."

RUMORS OF THE GUARDIANS' DECLINE HAVEN'T HELPED...

HE WONDERS IF JS86 EVER NEEDED DEFENDING. ADVANCES IN EUGENICS HAVE ALMOST BRED CRIMINAL TENDENCIES FROM THE POPULATION ALONG WITH DISCOLORED BLOSSOM.

A DAY HAS PASSED SINCE HIS LAST RECHARGING.

HE RECITES HIS OATH WITH LITTLE CONVICTION:

"IN FOREST DARK OR GLADE BEFERNED
NO BLADE OF GRASS SHALL GO UNTURNED.
LET THOSE THAT HAVE THE DAYLIGHT SPURNED
TREAD NOT WHERE THIS GREEN LAMP HAS BURNED."

JOTHRA. JOTHRA IS DEAD.

JUST TO WALK WITH HIM ONCE MORE THROUGH THE NOISELESS LIZARDGARDENS...

IN HIS CAVE OF DEAF METAL, GREAT MEDPHYL WEEPS, AND THE WALLS NEITHER HEAR NOR OFFER CONSOLATION.

J586:

ON THE UPPER LEVELS, DISMA BUYS A BOUQUET OF HUMMING-BIRDS AND LOCUSS SMILES AS SHE HANDS HIM THEIR STRINGS.

THE SMILE FREEZES. DISMA IS SCREAMING GROTESQUELY, HER FLESH BEGINS TO TWIST AND RIPPLE...

THE HORROR IMPACTED WITH THE MOST DENSELY POPULATED SECTION OF THE BANYAN COMPLEX.

UNLIKE WHAT FOLLOWED, THE IMPACT ITSELF WAS SILENT, INVISIBLE, BETRAYED BY NOT THE SLIGHTEST TREMOR.

AS THE SHRIEKING STARTS, SHURLO TURNS TO RUN BUT HER LEGS WILL NOT RESPOND. ONE OF THEM IS STRETCHING, ENTANGLING THE COUPLE BESIDE HER...

EXHIBIT TEN, THE FUSED FISH: THIS IS SHURLO'S LAST COHERENT THOUGHT BEFORE ENTERING PANDEMONIUM.

THE HORROR, REALIZING ITS MISTAKE, ATTEMPTED TO WITHDRAW, BUT IT HAD ALREADY ENSULFED FAR TOO MANY PEOPLE, ITS CONCENTRATION BURIED BENEATH AN AVALANCHE OF VOICES, OF ALIEN PERSONALITIES...

IT WAS TOO LATE. RETREAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.

THE MOUND OF AMALGAMATED BODIES QUIVERS AS IT STARTS TO RISE, FLAILING LIMBS PROTRUDING FROM ITS SURFACE.

CHEST MERGING WITH THAT OF ANOTHER, IMREL WEEPS AND REALIZES THE INADEQUACY AFFLICTING HIS PREVIOUS VISIONS OF DAMNATION.

TRAPPED IN A NEUROLOGICAL BABEL, THE HORROR UNDER-STOOD THE CATASTROPHE THAT HAD BEFALLEN IT ONLY DIMLY:

THE PLANTLIFE OF JS86 DIFFERED FROM THE FLORA IT HAD ANIMATED UPON OTHER WORLDS.

ON JS86, THE PLANTLIFE WAS ALREADY SENTIENT.

SANDMAN
ALL FLESH IS GRASS
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KAREN BERGER, Editor
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color st
JOHN COSTANZA
letterer
from an idea by
S.R. BISSETTE
6

(MERCIFUL O, LOOK AT IT! IT IS TOO MUCH FOR THE EYES TO COMPREHEND..)

(IT RAMPAGES AS IF MAD. THE BUILDINGS WILL BE DAMAGED.)

(THE BANYANS WILL REGROW BUT THESE POOR PEOPLE. WHAT OF THEM?)

DISMA? WHERE AM I? ALL THESE VOICES INSIDE MY MIND. IS ONE OF THEM YOURS?

LOCLISS? IS THAT YOU?

...PUNISHED, BECAUSE MY FAITH WAS WEAK...

STOP IT STOP IT STOP IT..

..JUST LIKE THE FUSED FISH. THE CROWD. THE CROWD IS INSIDE ME!

(IT'S HEADING TOWARDS THE NURSERY SECTOR. CAN WE SHOOT IT DOWN WITH A BATTERY OF FLAME CANNONS?)

(SHOOT IT? MAJOR, THAT HORROR IS MADE OF PEOPLE!)

STOP IT STOP IT STOP IT. STOP IT STOP IT

LOCLISS! IT'S YOU! I RECOGNIZE YOUR MEMORIES... THERE'S US, THIS AFTERNOON, BUT FROM YOUR VIEWPOINT

HELLO? PLEASE, WHO ELSE IS HERE? I'M SHURLO, HAVE YOU HEARD OF ME?

I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE TO YOU BEFORE.

NO, NEVER SO CLOSE

CAST ME INTO THIS HELL, THIS HELL OF OTHER PEOPLE.

STOP IT!

A THOUSAND DIFFERENT VOICES BELLOW IN AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE LANGUAGE, DEAFENING AS ALL THE CHOIRS OF ARMAGEDDON

HOPELESSLY ENCUMBERED BY THEIR STRINGS, THE FEATHERED BOUQUETS OF THE BIRD VENDORS MAKE FUTILE BIDS FOR FREEDOM..

...BUT ESCAPE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

LOCLISS? WHERE ARE WE? I-IT'S LIKE DREAMING EACH OTHER'S DREAMS...

US? RIDICULOUS. I'M NOT THAT LIFELESS...

LOOK, IN THIS POOL. THAT'S US, EMBRACING, AS WE SEE EACH OTHER. DO...DO I CLING SO TIGHTLY?

BUT... THAT'S HOW YOU SEE ME: CLINGING, MANEUVERING YOU INTO MARRIAGE...

OH LOOK! THEY'RE DWINDLING... GETTING SMALLER...

DISMA, I'VE TRIED TO BE RESPONSIVE. IF YOU'RE NOT SATISFIED...

ITS CELLS RAISED DISHARMONIOUS VOICES. THE HORROR MOANED...

...AND A THOUSAND VOICES ECHOED ITS LAMENTATION.

I...CAN'T. MY FAITH...IT'S CRIPPLED.

NO! IT RISES BEHIND YOU, MOUNTAINOUS...

FRIGHTENED...

BIG ENOUGH TO SHELTER ALL...

THERE! O'S PRIEST! HE'LL GUIDE US...

SAFE WITH FRIENDS. EVERY-BODY'S THOUGHTS... WONDERFUL...

SOME NERVE CLUSTERS INTEGRATED HARMONIOUSLY...

WHILE ELSEWHERE, CACOPHONY ENDURED LONGER.

NO! THIS PAINTING ISN'T MINE! PLANT FORMS ARE TOO PERSONAL.

THOSE BLACKENED INSENSITIVE STUMPS. OH, THEY'RE LONELY...

SUCH DISTRESS! WHO?

SHURLO. AN ARTIST...

DID SHE HALLUCINATE THAT IMAGE?

SOME PARTICIPANTS SUFFERED NEURAL PURGATORIES...

OTHERS FOUND CORTICAL PARADISE.

SEE! WE EMERGE FROM BARREN VALLEYS UNTO GREEN MEADOWS, AS O'S BOOK FORETOLD!

O! PRAISE O!

LOOK! THE STUMPS OF THE MARTYRS, SET AT ELYSIUM'S MOUTH!

HEAVEN AND HELL WERE INSIDE IT.

THE HORROR SCREAMED.

JS86:

ELDERLY CHALQUIS TAKES THE EVENING LIGHT UPON THE UPPER BRANCHWAYS, EXERCISING HIS FAVORITE SHRUB (OF IMMACULATE PEDIGREE BUT QUITE UNINTELLIGENT).

HE ENCOUNTERS OLMUTH, WHEELING HER YEARLING, DULKSMIT. CONDENSATION FOGS THE PLASTIC BUBBLE OF THE CHILD'S GROW-POD.

EVER GARRULOUS, CHALQUIS LISTS HIS SHRUB'S MISDEMEANORS: THE YEARLY SHEDDING; SHAKING POLLEN ON THE POTTED APES IN THE PUBLIC BEASTORCHARDS...

FROM HIS MUSTED SACK, DULKSMIT WHIMPERS. PICKING UP THE INFANT, OLMUTH HAPPENS TO GLANCE ALONG THE BOULEVARD...

SOMETHING THAT THREATENS REASON IS RUNNING BETWEEN THE BANYAN BLOCKS.

GATHERING DULKSMIT REFLEXIVELY IN HER BRITTLE ARMS, SHE MAKES FOR THE BOULEVARD'S [illegible] SIDE. SHE HEARS CHALQUIS, STUPID WITH TERROR, CALLING HIS SHRUB'S NAME, REPEATEDLY, URGENTLY...

"NOMBICCL!"

"NOMBICCL..."

EVERYTHING IS NOISE THEN, AS THE HORROR PASSES. SHE GLIMPSES HORROR'S SKIN WHICH SEEMS TO MOVE...

JUST TOO LATE TO STOP HERSELF, SHE REALIZES WHY. ALL PRETENSE OF A SAFE UNIVERSE IS PLANED SAVAGELY AWAY, AND OLMUTH SCREAMS.

THE SHRUB COUGHS PLAINTIVELY. THE CHILD SHIVERS AGAINST HER SHOULDER...

SHE AND CHALQUIS STARE NUMBLY ACROSS THE SUDDEN CHASM BETWEEN THEM. IT IS A GULF OF SILENCE, AN EVENT SO LARGE IT CAN NEVER AGAIN BE MENTIONED.

ELSEWHERE, AMONGST SHADOWS AND VOICES, LOCLISS AND DISMA OVERLOOK A SIMILAR ABYSS.

PHYSICALLY FUSED WITH HER, LOCLISS SHUDDERS, IMAGINING A LIFETIME OF SUCH PROXIMITY...

... EVEN AS DISMA RECOILS FROM THE YAWNING VOID OF HIS ABSENT PASSIONS.

THE HORROR DREW BACK LIPS MADE OF SMALL BOYS, BARED TEETH THAT WAVED TINY FISTS. FIFTY MAD FACES STARED UNBLINKINGLY FROM BEHIND EACH EYE-LID.

THE VOICES INSIDE IT ARGUED. MOST OF THEM SAID "RUN."

IN THE GALLERY OF SHURLO'S SOUL, ALL THE PICTURES ARE BARREN, ALL THE STATUES ISOLATED.

SHE IS ALONE. SHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ALONE.

OUTSIDE THE ART-BOUND WALLS OF HER PRISON, THE CROWD SOUNDS SO HAPPY.

THE HORROR SWIPED BLINDLY, GESTURED INARTICULATELY, NOTHING BUT AMOK

IN EACH HAND A POLITE, WELL-MANNERED FAMILY CLENCHED INTO A FIST OF BITTERNESS AND RECRIMINATION.

THE HORROR RAN, PALMS DAMP WITH ANGRY TEARS, FINGERS QUARRELING

A CHILD REMEMBERS WEARING WHITE MOTHS IN HER HAIR, A BIRTHDAY TREAT. A VAGRANT WONDERS IF HIS THINNING FOLIAGE WILL LAST THE WINTER.

IMREL TOUCHES EACH ONE, JOINING IN A CIRCLE OF SHARED SENSATION, AND THAT CIRCLE IS O...

THE HORROR TRAMPLED, ON FEET MADE OF CLERKS AND SOLDIERS AND LABORERS...

(IT'S COMING. WE CAN'T LET IT REACH OUR NURSERIES. PREPARE FLAME CANNONS.)

(NO! NO, WAIT! WE ARE DELIVERED.)

(IT IS HE.)

(GREAT MEDPHYL!)

(GREAT MEDPHYL! HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO!)

(YES... BUT HAS HE THE POWER? IF THE GUARDIANS ARE TRULY DISPERSED.)

...BUT BACK THEN, GREAT MEDPHYL WAS YOUNGER. HIS WILL WAS STRONG, AND THE GREEN FIRE BURNED FIERCE UPON HIS KNUCKLES.

BACK THEN, UDTHRA WAS ALIVE.

(MEDPHYL IS OUR CHAMPION...)

(MEDPHYL'S OLD.)

(YOU'RE RIGHT. "ONE RING TOO MANY"...)

"ONE RING TOO MANY"...)

OA'S FLAME GUTTERS IN CHANGE'S WIND. IF ONLY THESE FEW LAMPS REMAIN TO LIGHT A DARKENING COSMOS, CAN THERE EVER BE ONE RING TOO MANY?

NO. NO, OF COURSE NOT.

(NO. MEDPHYL WILL SAVE US. IN THE GREAT QUAKE OF '05 HE WRESTLED A CONTINENT...

COMMITTED, GREEN LANTERN RAISES HIS HAND.

AND THE HORROR IS CORED BY AN EXPERT BLADE OF EMERALD AND..

...AND DOZENS ARE SLICED FROM BUD TO ROOT, AND THE GUTTERS ARE STICKY WITH THE SAP OF INNOCENTS...

NO.

NOT VIOLENCE. RESTRAINT?

AND GREAT MEDPHYL CLENCHES HIS MIND AND THE HORROR IS MANACLED BY SHACKLES OF GREEN UNDERWATER LIGHT, AND..

...AND CHILDREN ARE CRUSHED AGAINST AN UNYIELDING PHOSPHORESCENT, SPLINTERING AS THE MONSTER STRUGGLES AGAINST HIS CHAINS...

NO. SOMETHING ELSE. STUNNING IT, PERHAPS...

...AND THE HORROR STAGGERS, THEN TOPPLES, AN AVALANCHE OF SCREAMING TIMBER, A LOGSLIDE OF PEOPLE, AND THEIR UNIDENTIFIABLE FRAGMENTS ARE SCATTERED OVER SEVERAL BLOCKS...

NO, NO, NO, NO!

NOTHING'S HAPPENING!

LOOK AT HIM! FROZEN LIKE A PETRIFIED FERN!

GREAT MEDPHYL! HELP US!

WHY DOESN'T HE DO SOMETHING?

IF ONLY JOTHRA WERE HERE, WITH HIS MARTIAL SKILLS, HIS WISDOM...

"CONFLICT ITSELF IS YOUR ONLY TRUE FOE. YOU CANNOT DEFEAT IT BY PHYSICAL FORCE, BECAUSE IT IS PHYSICAL FORCE. TO DEFEAT CONFLICT, YOU MUST ENGAGE YOUR OPPONENTS MIND..

ENGAGE THE MIND.

TOUCHING THE FLESH ENDANGERS INNOCENTS, YET BURIED BENEATH THAT MOUNTAIN OF INNOCENTS MUST BE THE MIND... THE AMALGAMATING FORCE THAT ANIMATES THEM SO GROTESQUELY...

THE GREEN LANTERN OF JS86 CONCENTRATES...

...AND HIS WILL IS A TERRIBLE, ROARING THING, A COLD SUNBURST PERCHED UPON HIS FIST...

A HANDFUL OF EXTRAORDINARY LIGHTS.

MORE DAZZLING THAN THE FRIGHTENING CROWNS OF ELMOS FIRE THE SKY SOMETIMES BESTOWED UPON TALLER BANYAMS, MORE FASCINATING THAN A LIGHTING-EMBROIDERED NIGHT, THE BRILLIANCE DANCES.

THE ONLOOKERS ARE A MOTIONLESS FOREST, SUCH AS MIGHT NOT BE FOUND THROUGHOUT THE BREADTH OF JS86.

THE HORROR PAUSES, CAPTIVATED BY A MOIRÉ OF FLUORESCENT LIME. TO EITHER SIDE PULSE STROBES OF ELECTRIC JADE. CAREFULLY, MEDPHYL INCREASES THEIR FREQUENCY.

AT NINETEEN CYCLES PER SECOND THE HORROR BECOMES RIGID, TRANSFIXED..

THE MIND OF ANY CORPORATE ENTITY MUST HARBOR SOME DEGREE OF CONFUSION. A CONFUSED MIND IS NOT DIFFICULT TO DISTRACT, OFFERING LITTLE RESISTANCE.

THUS DISTRACTED, THE HORROR MAY PERHAPS BE DISMANTLED.

THIS, AT LEAST IS MEDPHYL'S PLAN.

THROUGH THE SHIMMERING GLAMOUR, THE GREEN LANTERN EXTRUDES RAY TENTACLES, POWERFUL AND SENSITIVE, ALL THE WHILE MAINTAINING THE STROBING OPTIC DISPLAY.

WITH SOME SATISFACTION HE NOTES THAT HE'D NOT HAVE DARED ATTEMPT THIS AS A YOUNGER BEING.

LIKE A SHARK-FARMER ABOUT HIS HARVEST, MEDPHYL HAULS UPON A DOZEN LINES, REELING IN EACH RECLAIMED SOUL AS GREEN PHOTON FINGERS UNTANGLE IT FROM THE MESMERIZED CENTRAL MASS.

THE DISMANTLING BEGINS.

UNTANGLED, SET GENTLY DOWN ON GREEN THREADS FROM ABOVE, DISMA AND LOCLISS SEEK WORDS WHERE NO WORDS REMAIN.

THEY KNOW EACH OTHER, INTIMATELY; CRUSHINGLY. NOTHING REMAINS TO BE SAID.

SHE IS THE FIRST TO TURN AWAY, JUST.

UNRAVELED TO THE CHEST, THE HORROR'S HEART FLIES INTO PIECES, EACH FRAGMENT LOWERED TO SOLID EARTH AS THOUGH IT WERE PORCELAIN.

MELTING IN A LUMINOUS RAIN, THE HORROR'S BREAST IS TORN, SPILLING PEOPLE.

CHILDREN GATHER ABOUT IMREL'S LEGS, CLUTCHING AT HIS ROBE, AND HIS SPIRIT SOARS.

THEIR FACES ARE TURNED UP TO WATCH THE PYROTECHNIC MARVEL OF THE HEAVENS, EACH MOUTH FROZEN INTO THE SAME DIVINE SYLLABLE:

'O.'

NOW ONLY ITS FEET REMAIN, WHERE THE GREATEST INJURIES HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED, THOUGH WITHOUT FATALITY.

BINDING FRACTURES AS BEST HE CAN, MEDPHYL REFLECTS UPON THAT PART OF THE HORROR LEFT WHEN THE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PARED AWAY.

AMONGST THE LAST RESCUED, SHURLD FINDS THE CROWD ALREADY DISPERSING, DISCUSSING THEIR SHARED EXPERIENCE AS THEY WANDER AWAY TOGETHER.

SCARCELY HESITATING, SHE RUNS TO FOLLOW.

IF THEY REJECT HER, THERE'S ALWAYS THE HIGHEST LEVELS, THE LONGEST DROP...

ITS COMPONENT ATOMS SCATTER, RETURNING TO THEIR FAMILIES AND LIVES. ONLY ITS ESSENCE LINGERS, A WEB OF KNOTTED LIGHT STRUNG ON EMPTY AIR.

SEALED INSIDE A GREEN GLASS JAR, GREAT MEDPHYL SAVES THE HORROR'S SOUL FOR LATER.

LATER·

GREETINGS. IF YOU ARE CAPABLE OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION, MY RING SHOULD BE TRANSLATING FOR YOU.

I AM MEDHYL, THE GREEN LANTERN OF J586.

THE QUESTION IS, I THINK, WHAT IN O'S NAME ARE YOU?

I AM THE SWAMP THING OF PLANET EARTH. A CHANGE IN MY BIO-ELECTRICAL PATTERN HAS MADE ME INCOMPATIBLE WITH MY OWN WORLD.

I AM CONDEMNED TO WANDER THE STARS.. SEEKING A CURE..

AND CAUSING HAVOC?

I AM TRULY SORRY I DID NOT REALIZE. THAT ALL PLANTS HERE ARE SENTIENT

HAVING FORMED A BODY MY MIND WAS SUBMERGED IN A MASS DRONE TOO CONFUSED.. TO WITHDRAW.

PLEASE. I WAS TOLD. I MIGHT FIND HELP ON J586

WE HAVE DISCIPLINES TO MODIFY THE VIBRATIONAL RATE OF THE BIO-FIELD, IF THAT WOULD RID US OF YOU.

LEARNING THEM WOULD TAKE TIME!

I AM RELUCTANT TO REMAIN INCARNATE FOR TOO LONG. WITH NO VEGETATION, I CAN SAFELY INHABIT.

...WITH NO PROSPECT.. OF A BODY..

...AND IN HIS CAVE OF MUTE IRON AND DISCRETE ROCK, GREAT MEOPHYL'S SAP CHURNS WITH AN INDECISION UNKNOWN SINCE FIRST HE FATHOMED THE WEIRD OF THE GREEN LAMP...

...AND FINALLY HE DECIDES THAT YES, IT'S BLASPHEMY, OF COURSE IT'S BLASPHEMY..

...AND SUGGESTS IT ANYWAY..

...AND OH, SEE, THERE, HIS HAND. JOTHRA'S HAND IS MOVING...

TO WALK WITH HIM ONCE MORE IN THE KNOWING SILENCE BETWEEN THE THORNY CLUSTERS OF ROTTING SUNGAZERS, PAST WHERE THE GILAS SPRAWL LIKE OVER-RIPE FRUIT, YELLOW AND BLACK AND POISONOUS...

THEIR AMMONIAC AROMA IS HEAVY AND SENSUAL, PERMEATING THE LONG AFTERNOONS WITH AN EXQUISITE, UNBEARABLE NOSTALGIA.

BY NIGHT, IN THE CAVERN OF LAMPS, GREAT MEOPHYL WATCHES THE LIVING LIGHTNING OSCILLATE UPON ITS SENSOR-PEDESTAL, AS ANTIQUE DEMONS DANCE IN THEIR CHALK CIRCLES...

OBSERVING A FEEDBACK SCREEN-IMAGE OF ITS WAVE PATTERNS IT NOTES THEIR CHANGES AND LEARNS TO CONTROL THEM.

UNFETTERED BY BASE SUBSTANCE IT LEAPS, BURNS, IS GLORIOUS: THE VERY SOUL OF THE GREAT LANTERN ITSELF...

THROUGH GLADES OF JEWELLED LACERTAS, COOL AND OCEAN-GREEN, PRETTY FEMALES GLIDE IN CONVERSATION, WEARING SPRAYS TO MASK THE SCENT OF THEIR FLOWERS FOR MODESTY'S SAKE. JOTHRA SEEMS TO SMILE, REMINISCENTLY.

MEOPHYL BASKS IN HIS MENTOR'S PRESENCE, RECALLING HIS HUMOR, HIS KINDLINESS, JOTHRA WOULD EAT ONLY ANIMALS, NEVER THE FLESH OF THE LOWER VEGETABLES.

THE MEMORIES ARE GLAD AND PLENTIFUL, AND SO THE DAYS PASS.

COME AFTER DARK, THE REANIMATING SPIRIT IS SET LOOSE, EAGER FOR ITS EXERCISE, AND GREEN ARC-LIGHT FLASHES ON WALLS OF DAMP BASALT

A SINE WAVE SHIMMERS, CONDENSES INTO A JAGGED SIZZLE, THEN STRETCHES IN A FUNNEL OF LUMINOUS THREADS TOWARDS THE VAULTED SHADOWS ABOVE.

HOW QUICKLY THIS DEMON LEARNS, CAVORTING IN ITS CHALK CIRCLE.

IT WILL NOT ABIDE FOR LONG IN THIS PLACE.

REARED UPON THEIR HIND LEGS, MONITORS SWAY GENTLY IN THE DUSK WINDS. HIGH ABOVE, TETHERED TO SPARS OF CRYSTAL, DWARF PTERANODONS CLACK DRONSILY TO EACH OTHER, SETTLING DOWN FOR THE DARK, AND WITH THEIR SPARSE BONE PERCUSSION THE EVENING IS MADE PERFECT, MADE COMPLETE.

FILLED WITH SENTIMENTS THAT HAVE NO NAMES, MEOPHYL HOLDS HIS MASTER AND KNOWS THAT THIS IS THE LAST NIGHT.

YOU... YOU WILL BE LEAVING SOON?

YES, I AM CONFIDENT OF MY ABILITY... TO MODIFY MY WAVELENGTH... ASSURED THAT THE EARTH... WILL ONCE AGAIN *ACCEPT* ME...

I AM ANXIOUS... TO *RETURN* THERE...

I CANNOT .. THANK YOU ENOUGH... FOR *AIDING* ME SO... WHEN I HAVE BROUGHT YOU... ONLY TROUBLE...

NO. NOT TROUBLE. YOU MUST NOT THINK THAT...

YOU ARE... TOO FORGIVING. I SHALL IMPOSE .. UPON YOU NO FURTHER, GOODBYE.. MY FRIEND.

WAIT! YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MORE THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY *KNOW*. YOU'VE GIVEN ME A CHANCE TO COME TO TERMS WITH MY GRIEF.

A CHANCE TO SAY GOODBYE TO...

JOTHRA?

FROM THEIR SEPARATE WINDOWS, DISMA AND LOCLISS WATCH THE EMERALD SHOOTING STAR ASCEND.

ELSEWHERE, SHURLO WANTS TO PAINT IT, TO CAPTURE ITS LONELINESS.

IMREL, PAUSING IN MID SERMON, TAKES IT FOR A SIGN.

AND, IN THE LIZARD GARDENS, GREAT MEDPHYL WEEPS, AND THE WEEPING IS GOOD. FROM J586 A BOLT OF GREEK FIRE CRACKLES INTO THE VOID, GOING AWAY...

GOING HOME.

IT'S GOOD OF YOU TO HELP ME GET THIS ACID RAIN REPORT TOGETHER. AFTER... A-AFTER ALL THE *WEIRDNESS* THE OTHER WEEK I FIGURED MAYBE YOU'D STEER *CLEAR*...

:THPPFT:

OH, HEY, NO. NO WAY!

I MEAN, I GUESS IT *DID* FREAK ME OUT, SORT OF, BUT HEY, I *KNOW* YOU WERE INTO SOME STRANGE *SPACES* ALL *ALONG*.

:THPPFT: YOU WANT SOME OF THIS?

NO. NO THANKS, I DON'T.

THAT'S COOL. Y'KNOW, IT'S A REAL TRIP WORKING WITH YOU ON THIS. I KNOW I HAVEN'T *KNOWN* YOU LONG, BUT...

GENG-GLANG

UH OH. CHESTER, I DON'T KNOW WHO THAT *IS*, BUT HIDE THAT STUFF WHILE I *ANSWER* IT.

THIS IS *LOUISIANA*, REMEMBER.

ABIGAIL CABLE? DO I HAVE THE RIGHT ADDRESS?

UH, YES, YES I'M ABBY CABLE. YOU'RE...?

STRANGE.

ADAM STRANGE.

I'VE GOT A *MESSAGE* FOR YOU, FROM YOUR *LOVER*, THE *SWAMP CREATURE*. HE TOLD ME TO TELL YOU HE'S ALIVE AND...

WHAAT? ALEC SAID THIS? OH GOD!

WHOA! SLOW DOWN. WHAT *IS* ALL THIS?

WELL, THE COMPLETE MESSAGE I WAS ASKED TO GIVE MS. CABLE IS THAT SWAMP THING IS STILL ALIVE AND PROMISES TO RETURN AS SOON AS HE CAN.

OH, THIS IS *WONDERFUL*. I CAN'T *BELIEVE* IT. WHERE *IS* HE?

I MET HIM ON THE PLANET *RANN* IN THE *CENTAURI* SYSTEM, BUT HE WAS HEADING ON TO J586, NEAR *MINRAUD*.

AFTER THAT, ALL BEING WELL, HE MAY BE COMING *HOME*.

HE HELPED AVERT A FAMINE. AND I SAID I'D DELIVER HIS MESSAGE AS *REPAYMENT*.

I TRAVEL BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN RANN AND THIS PLANET ON A *ZETA BEAM* QUITE REGULARLY, SO YOU SEE IT'S REALLY NO TROUBLE...

NO? WELL YOU JUST CALL UP *SCOTTY* ON YOUR *COMMUNICATOR* AND TELL HIM TO *ZETA BEAM* YOU THE HELL *OUT* OF HERE, YOU GODDAMNED LUNATIC!

BUT...

COME ON, MAN, I THINK MAYBE YOU BETTER SPLIT.

BUT YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND*. I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR *YEARS* NOW. THERE'S A FLASH OF *LIGHT*, AND I'M ON ANOTHER *PLANET*.

YEAH...

YEAH, I SOMETIMES GET THAT.

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"THEY WERE LOVERS, SIRE...

"LOVERS IN THE PLACE OF GIANTS.

"I VISITED THEM OFTEN IN THEIR BRIDAL SUITE, AND WAS WITNESS TO THE SPECTACLE OF THEIR FROZEN PASSION.

"THERE TO PONDER THE LESSONS OF FUTILITY ON DISPLAY, SCULPTED BY THE LIVING FLESH OF BEINGS THE SIZE OF STAR CLUSTERS.

"POOR CELESTIALS, LIKE OURSELVES, WHO DARED ATTEMPT THAT WHICH I ONCE THOUGHT UNATTAINABLE...

"CONDEMNED TO DRIFT IN ETERNAL HUMILIATING SEPARATION...

"FROM EACH OTHER...

"...AND FROM THE SOURCE."

G-3083

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"AND SO, SIRE, I FOUND MY WAY BACK TO THE LAST SIGNPOST ON THE FRINGES OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE, THE PROMETHIAN GALAXY...

"...WHERE DWELLS THE CURSE OF METRON."

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

ANOTHER RIVULET OF REALITY THAT MY MOBIUS CHAIR HAS OPENED TO ME, ONLY LEADING BACK... BACK TO THE SOURCE.

THE ONE CONSTANT IN A UNIVERSE OF CHANGE-- IT REMAINS AS EVER, SERENE, OMNIPOTENT, ALL-WISE... THE ULTIMATE MYSTERY HIDDEN BEHIND THE FINAL BARRIER.

THESE POOR CREATURES WERE ONCE SEARCHERS, LIKE MYSELF. THEY TRIED TO ENLARGE THEIR ATOMIC STRUCTURES IN HOPES OF ENGULFING THE FINAL BARRIER...

HOW SAD WHEN HEARTS THAT ONCE LIVED ONLY FOR EACH OTHER TAKE A MILLION YEARS TO FEEL A SINGLE BEAT.

THEY CRY OUT THAT ALL HOPE OF UNVEILING THE SOURCE IS FOLLY..

IF THAT IS TRUE, THEN METRON'S WHOLE LIFE IS FOLLY...

AND PERHAPS IT IS TIME HE TOOK HIS PLACE AMONG THE OTHER FAILURES.

2

PERHAPS...

...BUT NOT THIS TIME.

THERE'S STILL TOO MUCH TO LEARN. SURELY THE ANSWER I SEEK ALREADY EXISTS, BACK THERE, IN A UNIVERSE TEEMING WITH LIFE.

...I NEED ONLY LET IT FIND ME.

PING!

EH? WHAT'S THIS?

3

"IT WAS A SIGNAL, SIRE... SO PATHETICALLY FAINT THAT EVEN MY WONDROUS MOBIUS CHAIR COULD BARELY FOLLOW IT...

PING PING PING PING PING PING

"STRANGER STILL, IT SEEMED TO BE EMANATING FROM THE SHOULDER HARNESS OF ONE OF THE FROZEN COLOSSI.

"ALWAYS CURIOUS WHEN CONFRONTED WITH UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENON, I DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE."

PING PING PING

I'M SURE THE MADAME WILL PARDON THIS INTRUSION IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE.

AMAZING

THINGS ARE *GROWING* IN HERE .. BIZARRE FLORA THAT I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE, SOMEHOW TENACIOUSLY CLINGING TO LIFE IN THE ARTIFICIAL ENVIRONMENT OF HER SPACESUIT.

JUST A FEW SAMPLES FOR FURTHER STUDY, THEN I'LL TRACK DOWN THIS MYSTERIOUS *SIGNAL*...

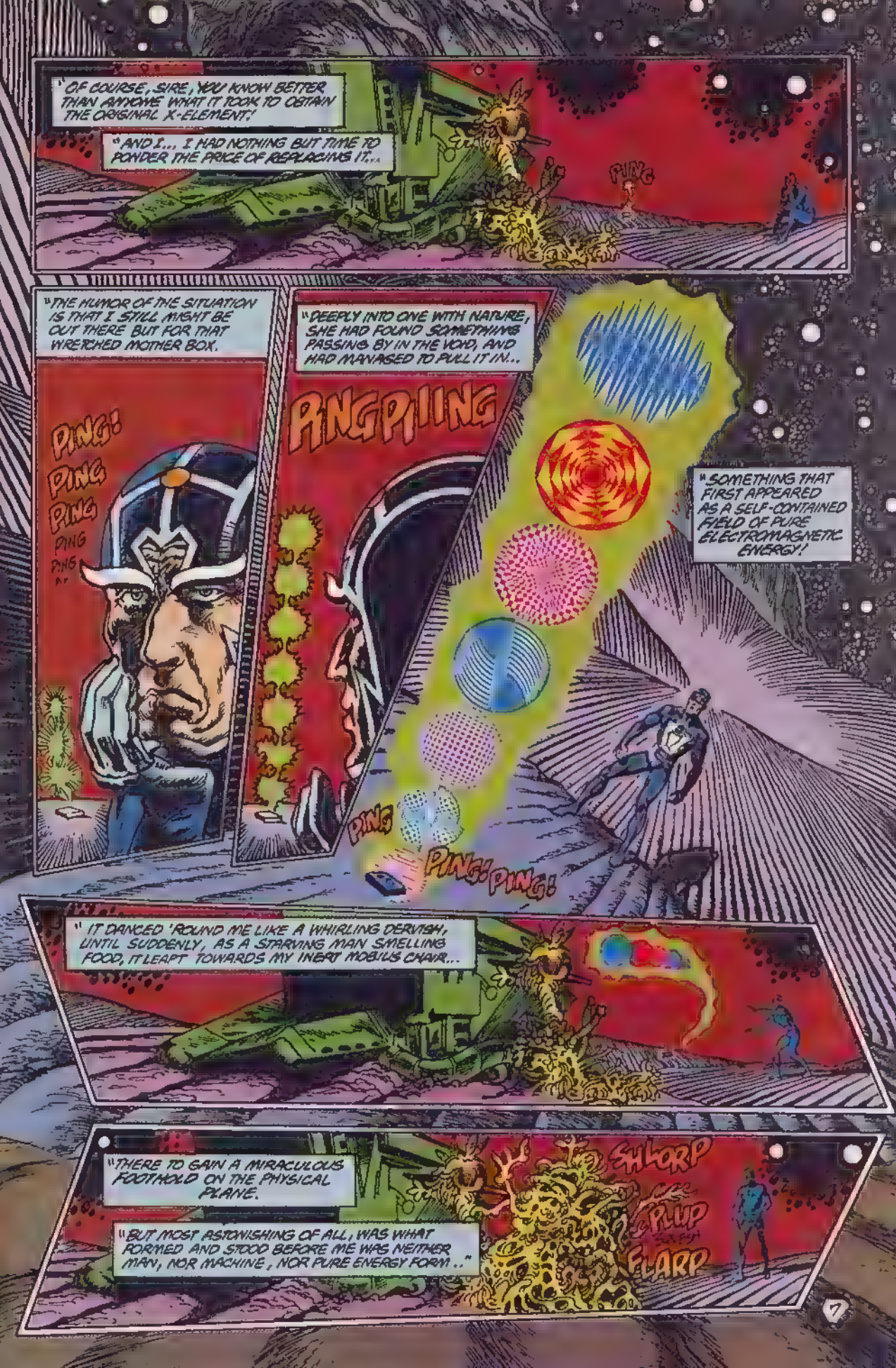
I'LL BE DAMNED IF IT DOESN'T SOUND ALMOST...*FAMILIAR*.

BY HIGHFATHER'S BEARD--*IT'S A MOTHER BOX*... SWOLLEN TO THE SIZE OF A SMALL MOON!

PING PING PING PING PING PING PING

"AS YOU KNOW, SIRE, EACH MOTHER BOX POSSESSES A MYSTICAL RAPPORT WITH NATURE; ALTHOUGH AS A SCIENTIST, I'VE ALWAYS HAD LITTLE USE FOR SUCH HOCUS POCUS..."
PING
PING
PING
I HEAR YOU.
YES... I CAN HELP YOU.
BUT FIRST I'LL HAVE TO SHRINK YOUR ATOMIC STRUCTURE BACK TO A MORE MANAGEABLE SIZE.
SHRAAAAK
PING
PING
PING
HMM. THAT ENERGY DRAIN WAS SIGNIFICANT. I WOULDN'T WANT TO ATTEMPT SUCH A FEAT WITH YOUR OWNER.
YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THE SLEEK NEW UNITS THAT I SEE SO MANY XXXMS GODS RELYING ON THESE DAYS..
YOU'RE AN OLDER MODEL, ONE OF HIMON'S EARLY DESIGNS I REMEMBER FROM MY OWN YOUTH.
PING
PING
I CAN'T IMAGINE ANYONE RELYING ON SOMETHING AS CRUDE AS A MOTHER BOX TO BREACH THE FINAL BARRIER...
CELESTIALS WERE SO NAIVE IN THOSE DAYS...
PERHAPS THE CURATOR OF HIGH FATHER'S MUSEUMS WILL FIND SOME VALUE IN YOU.
I'LL JUST SET A COURSE FOR HIGH FATHER'S STAFF AND...
5

"IMAGINE MY SURPRISE, SIRE, WHEN I PRESSED THE STUDS ON MY WONDROUS MOBIUS CHAIR AND INSTEAD OF SLICING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, IT MERELY COUGHED AND DROPPED LIKE A STONE..."
KOF
SPUT
SPUT
SPUT
SPUT
KREEASH
WHAT THE?
THIS IS ABSURD! MY CHAIR HAS NEVER FAILED ME... NEVER.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY CHAIR?
BY DARKSEID'S DEMONS! THE PRECIOUS X-ELEMENT-- IT'S DEPLETED!
A-AND WITHOUT IT, MY MIRACULOUS MOBIUS CHAIR IS NOTHING MORE THAN A PIECE OF FURNITURE!
YOU! THIS IS YOUR FAULT!
PING?
IF I HADN'T WASTED ALL THAT ENERGY REDUCING YOUR ATOMIC STRUCTURE...
PIIIII
THWAKE
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE COST ME?
6


"OF COURSE, SIRE, YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE WHAT IT TOOK TO OBTAIN THE ORIGINAL X-ELEMENT!
"AND I... I HAD NOTHING BUT TIME TO PONDER THE PRICE OF REPLACING IT...
PING
"THE HUMOR OF THE SITUATION IS THAT I STILL MIGHT BE OUT THERE BUT FOR THAT WRETCHED MOTHER BOX.
PING! PING PING PING PING
"DEEPLY INTO ONE WITH NATURE, SHE HAD FOUND SOMETHING PASSING BY IN THE VOID, AND HAD MANAGED TO PULL IT IN...
PINGPING
"SOMETHING THAT FIRST APPEARED AS A SELF-CONTAINED FIELD OF PURE ELECTROMAGNETIC ENERGY!
PING
PING! PING!
"IT DANCED 'ROUND ME LIKE A WHIRLING DERVISH, UNTIL SUDDENLY, AS A STARVING MAN SMELLING FOOD, IT LEAPT TOWARDS MY INERT MOBIUS CHAIR...
"THERE TO GAIN A MIRACULOUS FOOTHOLD ON THE PHYSICAL PLANE.
"BUT MOST ASTONISHING OF ALL, WAS WHAT FORMED AND STOOD BEFORE ME WAS NEITHER MAN, NOR MACHINE, NOR PURE ENERGY FORM..."
SHLORP
PLUP
FLARP

"...HE WAS A VEGETABLE."
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letterer
Karen Berger
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8

FEAR NOT. I MEAN YOU... NO HARM JUST TELL ME .. WHERE I AM... THIS TIME.

ASK HER. SHE'S THE ONE WHO BROUGHT YOU HERE.

PERSONALLY, I WAS HOPING FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE GODLIKE...

PING

THIS.. WAS THE COMFORTING VOICE.. THAT CALLED TO ME .. IN THE VOID ? IT IS STRANGE... THAT YOU WOULD ADDRESS .. A MACHINE... AS HER.

AND YET... I FEEL IT TOO. THAT SOMEHOW... SHE IS ALIVE.

PING

ALIVE... AND TRYING... TO TELL ME SOMETHING...

...EVERYTHING...

PING

PING PING PING

PING PING PING

OH, SHE'LL NAG YOUR EAR OFF IF YOU LET HER.

SHE TELLS ME... SHE BROUGHT ME HERE... BECAUSE YOU WISH TO GO THERE... INTO WHAT SHE CALLS... THE SOURCE.

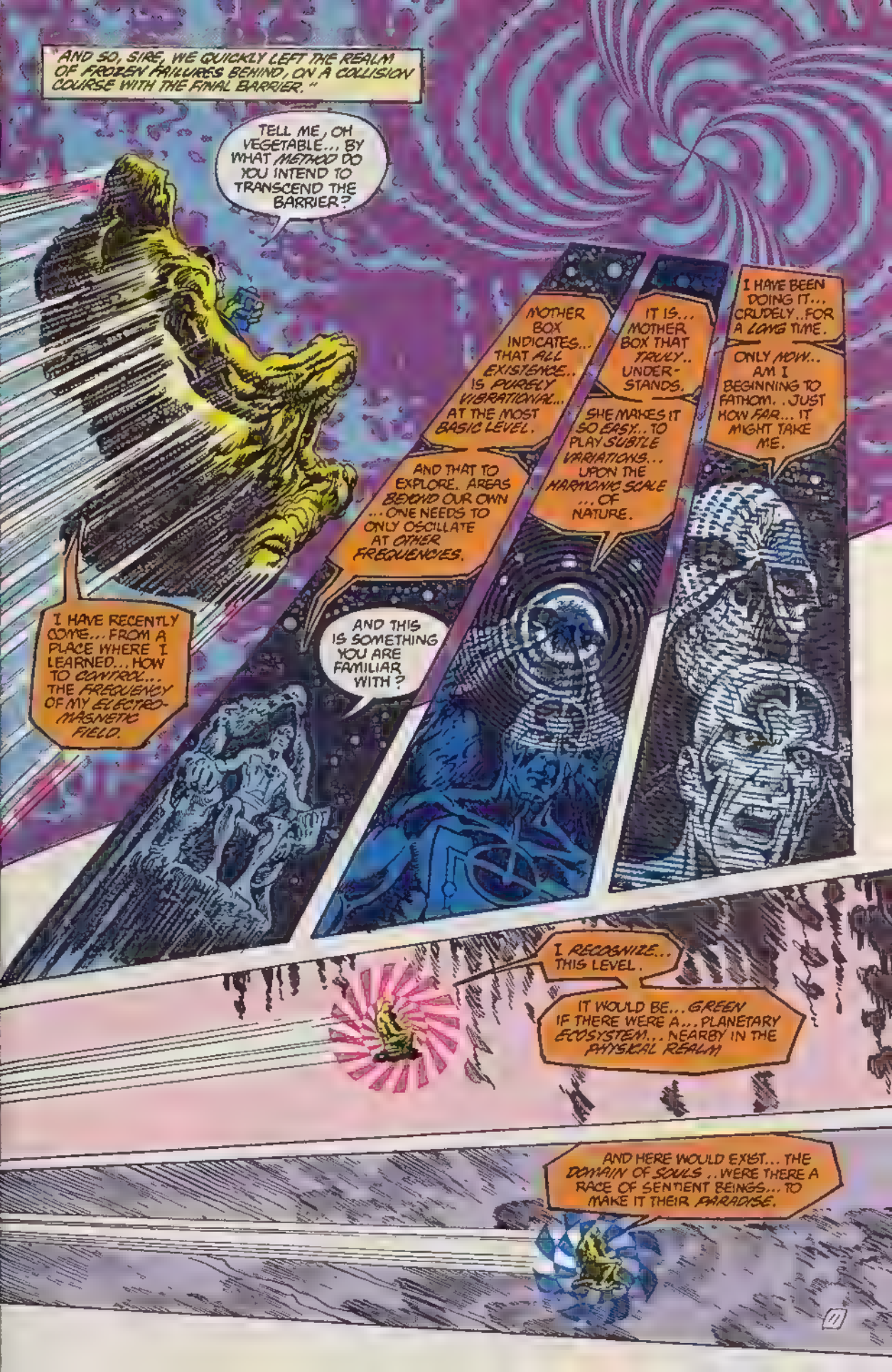
WRONG! WHAT I NEED NOW IS TRANSPORT FOR MYSELF AND MY EQUIPMENT TO A PLACE CALLED APOKOLIPS.

NO. YOUR DESTINY... IS THERE... WITHIN THE CENTER... OF EVERYTHING.

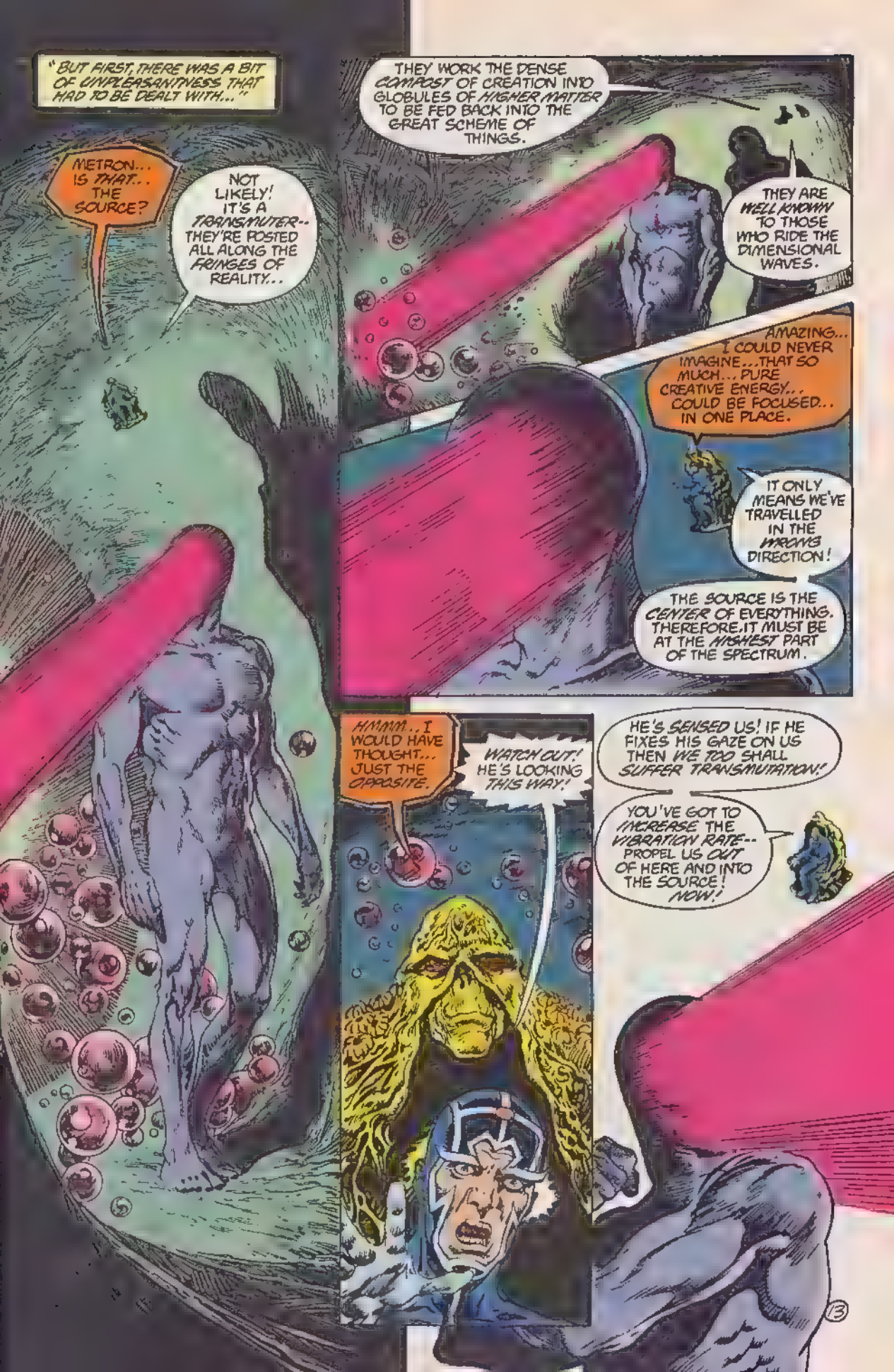
AND NOW, THAT I'VE SEEN IT... SO IS MINE.

RRRING!

HORRUMPH! AND WHAT OTHER FANTASIES HAS THIS... THIS CALCULATOR INFORMED YOU OF?
THAT SHE AND I... WORKING TOGETHER... CAN TAKE YOU INTO THE SOURCE AND BACK.
IT IS NOT FOR ONE SUCH AS I TO RIDE UNGAINLY IN THE ARMS OF SOME MONSTROSITY.
WHEN METRON CONQUERS THE FINAL BARRIER, HE SHALL DO SO AS THE CELESTIAL HE IS... SEATED IN HIS WONDROUS MOBIUS CHAIR.
SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT LESSONS... IN MY JOURNEYS .. HAVE CONCERNED... POWER AND EGO.
I'VE LEARNED IT IS NOT WISE... TO LET SELF IMAGE... GET IN THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING.
IF YOU UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT MEANT TO BE A GOD, YOU'D KNOW I HAVE NO CHOICE.
THEN MY CHOICE.. IS TO COOPERATE... WITH DESTINY... AND BECOME YOUR .. VEHICLE.
PING
SLIP
PING
PLOOP
FRUP
SHLAK
HA! AN ELEGANT SOLUTION FOR SUCH A LOWER LIFE FORM.
PERHAPS I WILL CONSENT TO ACCOMPANY YOU, AS YOUR PILOT OF COURSE.
OF COURSE...
PING
ALTHOUGH I HAVE NEVER MOVED MY PHYSICAL BODY.. THROUGH THE VOID...
MOTHER BOX SAYS THAT SHE... CAN MAKE IT POSSIBLE.
JUST AS SHE PROVIDES.. THE BOOST WE NEED... TO CLEAR THE GRAVITY... OF THIS PROMETHIAN GIANT.
10

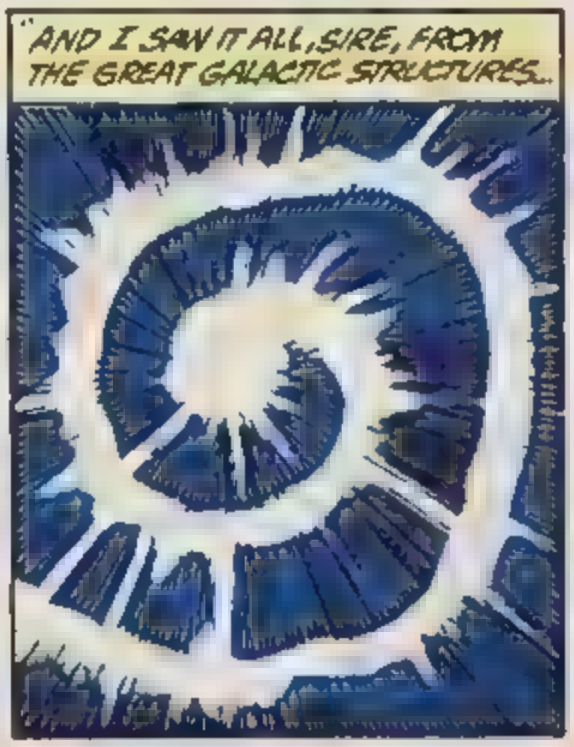

"AND SO, SIRE, WE QUICKLY LEFT THE REALM OF FROZEN FAILURES BEHIND, ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH THE FINAL BARRIER."
TELL ME, OH VEGETABLE... BY WHAT METHOD DO YOU INTEND TO TRANSCEND THE BARRIER?
I HAVE RECENTLY COME... FROM A PLACE WHERE I LEARNED... HOW TO CONTROL... THE FREQUENCY OF MY ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELD.
AND THIS IS SOMETHING YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH?
AND THAT TO EXPLORE. AREAS BEYOND OUR OWN ...ONE NEEDS TO ONLY OSCILLATE AT OTHER FREQUENCIES.
MOTHER BOX INDICATES... THAT ALL EXISTENCE.. IS PURELY VIBRATIONAL... AT THE MOST BASIC LEVEL.
IT IS... MOTHER BOX THAT TRULY.. UNDER-STANDS.
SHE MAKES IT SO EASY... TO PLAY SUBTLE VARIATIONS... UPON THE HARMONIC SCALE ...OF NATURE.
I HAVE BEEN DOING IT... CRUDELY..FOR A LONG TIME.
ONLY NOW... AM I BEGINNING TO FATHOM. . JUST HOW FAR... IT MIGHT TAKE ME.
I RECOGNIZE... THIS LEVEL.
IT WOULD BE... GREEN IF THERE WERE A... PLANETARY ECOSYSTEM... NEARBY IN THE PHYSICAL REALM
AND HERE WOULD EXIST... THE DOMAIN OF SOULS . . WERE THERE A RACE OF SENTIENT BEINGS... TO MAKE IT THEIR PARADISE.

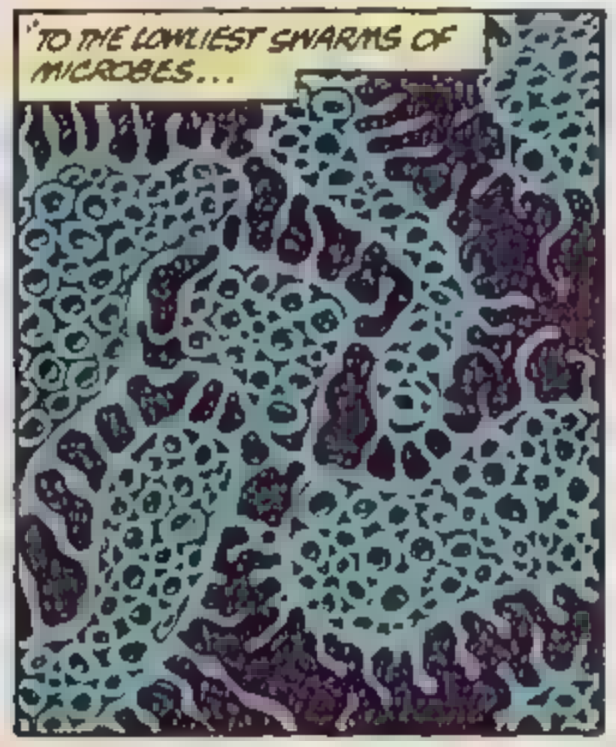
WHADS HABBENING? WHERE ARE WE NOW?
I DO NOD KNOW... MOTHER BOGGS HAS POOSHHD US... INDO REALMS.. THAD ARE NEW DO ME.
SHE HAZ ZLOWED DOWN... OUR VIBRADORY PIDJ... WE HAVE ENDERED... A PLAZE... WHERE GROSS AND SOULLESS MADDER... ARE THE DOMINAND LIVE FORMS...
I CAN FEEL MY HEARDBEAD SLOWINNG... EACH THOUGHD... CRAWLINNG AD GLACIER SPEED...
THAD DAMNED MOTHER BOGGS! SHE'S TURNING UZ ALL INDO PROMETHIANN GIANDS. I KNEW ID!
"AT THIS POINT, SIRE, A LESSER CELESTIAL MIGHT HAVE SHOWN FEAR...
"FORTUNATELY, THE VEGETABLE WAS HOLDING UP QUITE WELL, BETTER IN FACT THAN ONE MIGHT EXPECT.
"IT WAS LATER THAT EVENTS OVERTOOK HIS SANITY...
"LATER, WHEN WE ENTERED THE SOURCE.
12

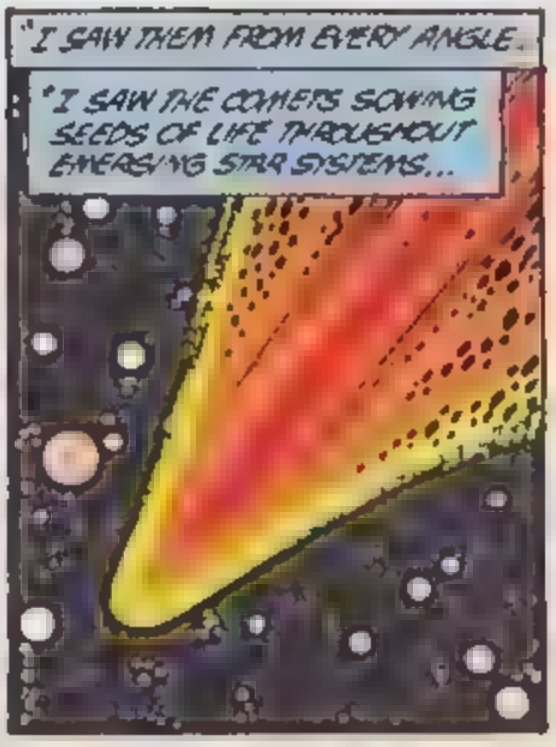

"BUT FIRST, THERE WAS A BIT OF UNPLEASANTNESS THAT HAD TO BE DEALT WITH..."
METRON... IS THAT... THE SOURCE?
NOT LIKELY! IT'S A TRANSMUTER-- THEY'RE POSTED ALL ALONG THE FRINGES OF REALITY...
THEY WORK THE DENSE COMPOST OF CREATION INTO GLOBULES OF HIGHER MATTER TO BE FED BACK INTO THE GREAT SCHEME OF THINGS.
THEY ARE WELL KNOWN TO THOSE WHO RIDE THE DIMENSIONAL WAVES.
AMAZING... I COULD NEVER IMAGINE...THAT SO MUCH... PURE CREATIVE ENERGY... COULD BE FOCUSED... IN ONE PLACE.
IT ONLY MEANS WE'VE TRAVELLED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION!
THE SOURCE IS THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING. THEREFORE, IT MUST BE AT THE HIGHEST PART OF THE SPECTRUM.
HMMM.. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT... JUST THE OPPOSITE.
WATCH OUT! HE'S LOOKING THIS WAY!
HE'S SENSED US! IF HE FIXES HIS GAZE ON US THEN WE TOO SHALL SUFFER TRANSMUTATION!
YOU'VE GOT TO INCREASE THE VIBRATION RATE-- PROPEL US OUT OF HERE AND INTO THE SOURCE! NOW!
13

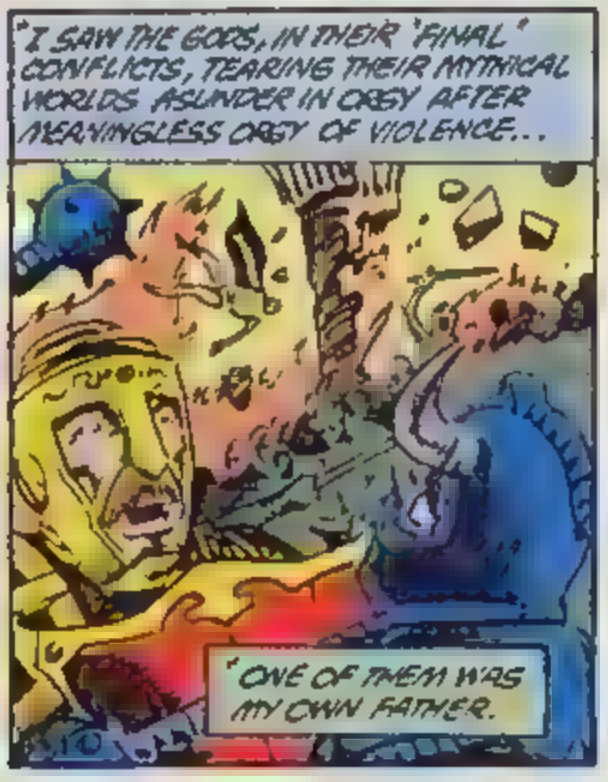
MOTHER BOX SAYS... WHAT YOU ARE ASKING FOR... IS IMPOSSI--
AAARRGGHH
PING!
FOOL! WE EITHER ATTAIN THE SOURCE AMONG THE LIVING... OR AMONG THE DEAD!
AND AS I STAND BEFORE YOU NOW, S'RE, HE DID IT. ALTHOUGH THE COST WAS HIGH
"SOMEHOW THE VEGETABLE WAS ABLE TO ATTAIN THE CORRECT VIBRATIONAL PATTERN.
"...AND AT THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT, OPEN THE FINAL BARRIER...
"... AND PROVIDE AN ANSWER TO THE ULTIMATE QUESTION..
"... AT THE EXPENSE OF HIS OWN SANITY."
14

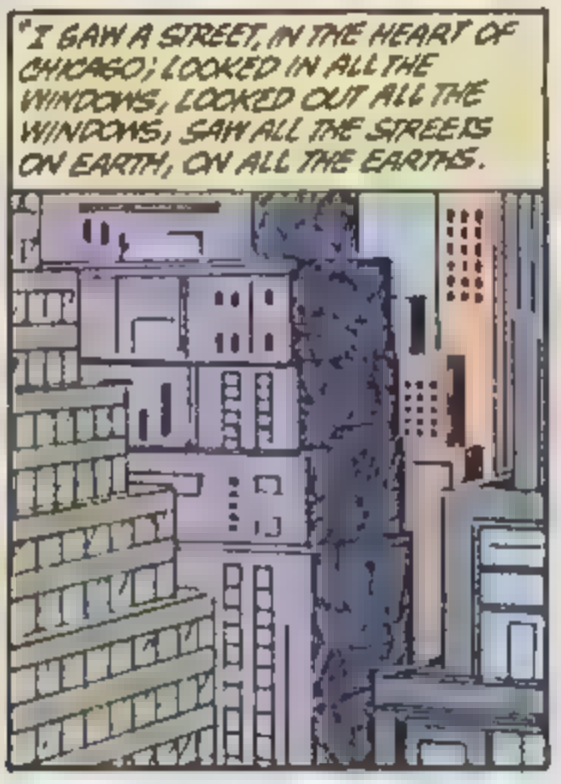
"AS I COME NOW TO THE INEFFABLE CLIMAX OF MY STORY, MY DESPAIR AS A NARRATOR BEGINS. TO DESCRIBE THE SOURCE... HOW DOES ONE CONVEY THE ACT OF SEEING ALL OF INFINITY WITHIN ONE GIGANTIC INSTANT? TO DRINK IN BILLIONS OF ACTIONS, THE TOTALITY OF EVERYTHING, OBSERVED FROM EVERY POINT IN THE UNIVERSE, ALL IN LESS TIME THAN IT TAKES TO DRAW A SINGLE BREATH. EVEN MY GREAT INTELLECT WAS OVERWHELMED BY IT, SIRE. WHAT MY EYES SAW WAS SIMULTANEOUS AND OCCUPYING THE SAME POINT, SO I CAN ONLY ACCOUNT FOR WHAT WONDERS I WAS ABLE TO FOCUS ON AND REMEMBER IN THAT TIDAL WAVE OF INFORMATION...

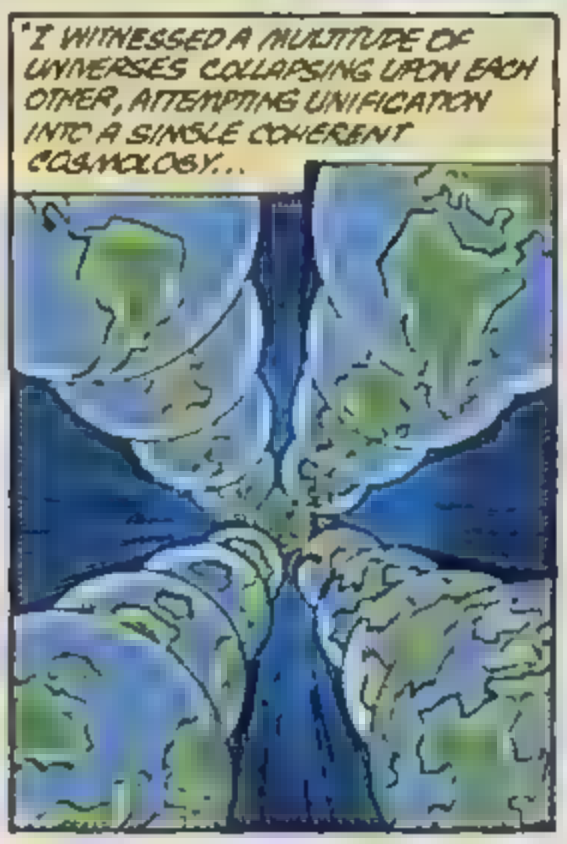


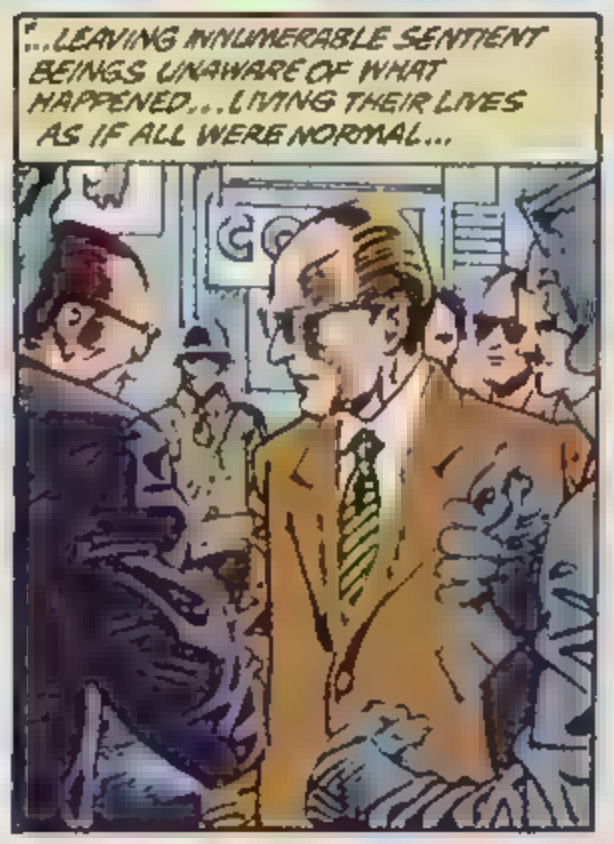





"I SAW THE GODS, IN THEIR 'FINAL' CONFLICTS, TEARING THEIR MYTHICAL WORLDS ASUNDER IN ORGY AFTER MEANINGLESS ORGY OF VIOLENCE...
"ONE OF THEM WAS MY OWN FATHER.


"I SAW A STREET, IN THE HEART OF CHICAGO; LOOKED IN ALL THE WINDOWS, LOOKED OUT ALL THE WINDOWS, SAW ALL THE STREETS ON EARTH, ON ALL THE EARTHS.


"I WITNESSED A MULTITUDE OF UNIVERSES COLLAPSING UPON EACH OTHER, ATTEMPTING UNIFICATION INTO A SINGLE COHERENT COSMOLOGY...



"I SHIELDED MY EYES FROM THE GLARE OF A TRILLION SUNS REFLECTED ON TEN TRILLION OCEANS...

"WHILE I FOLLOWED A SINGLE SPIDER, SPINNING HER SILKEN WEB, IN THE DARKEST DARK CORNER OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.

"I FELT THE PULSE OF ALL THE LIFE BLOOD PUMPED THROUGH ALL THE VEINS AND ARTERIES OF ALL THE LIVING THINGS...

"I SWAM THE HEAVING SEAS AND COUNTED EACH MICRO-SCOPIC LIFEFORM CONTAINED THEREIN.

"I RODE UPON GLACIERS AS THEY GROUND MOUNTAINS INTO GRAINS OF SAND...

"I SAW A LONG WAR BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS RESOLVED, AS HEAVEN AND HELL INTERTWINED INTO A SEDUCTIVE MATING DANCE...

"IN A GARRET IN BUENOS AIRES, I SAT TYPING WITH A GENIUS, BLIND TWENTY YEARS.

"I PLAYED TIGHT END FOR THE FORTY-NINERS IN LAST YEAR'S SUPERBOWL...

"WITH MY TRIBAL BROTHERS, I FELT THE COOL PALEO-LITHIC BREEZE AS WE FEASTED UPON THE FLESH OF OUR ENEMIES ..

"I RAN WITH THE LEMMINGS ON THEIR MAD DASH TO OBLIVION...

"I DRANK THE WINE OF EVERY FERMENTED GRAPE...

"I CRIED IN HUMILIATION ALONG WITH EACH PROMETHIAN GIANT, THEN LAUGHED AT THEIR SPECTACLE...

"I LAID THE PAVING STONES FOR THE FIRST HIGHWAYS OF MAN...

"...AND SAT STALLED IN THE CHOKING GRIDLOCK OF HIS PRESENT-DAY STREETS...

"I DREAMT RIGHT ALONG WITH SLEEPING HUMANKIND AND SAW HOW THEY HAVE YET TO AWAKEN IN THESE REALMS...

"AND MAPPED EACH SNOWFLAKE THAT HAS EVER FALLEN OR EVER WILL...

"I SMELT RANCID GREASE DRIPPING ON A STOVETOP COUNTER...

"...AND WONDERED AT THE BEAUTY OF THE TAJ MAHAL...

"I FLEW WITH PTERODACTYLS, WINGS BEATING FURIOUSLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO OUTRACE EXTINCTION...

"I SAW THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR UNFOLDING, ALL THE SEASONS OF ALL THE YEARS...

"A BABY KITTEN, SUFFERING DISTEMPER...

"ALL THE PAWNS MOVED IN ALL THE GAMES EVER PLAYED...

"A PEACOCK, SPREADING HIS FEATHERS, REVEALING THE GAZE OF A HUNDRED JEWELED EYES...

"I SAW THE HEEL OF A SHOE, CRUSHING A DELICATE FLOWER...

"...THE MANIA AND DELUSIONS THAT ACCOMPANY ALL CIVILIZATIONS.

"I WATCHED THE ELEMENTS BEING FORMED WITHIN THE CRUCIBLES OF THE STARS...

"...THE GASSES THAT BREW IN THE CLOSED SYSTEMS OF THE PLANETS...

"THE OMENS THAT AUGER ALL FUTURE ACTS...

6
6

"...A GAMBLER'S DISCARDS.

"I SAW TIME, NOT AS A LINEAR PROGRESSION OF EVENTS, BUT AS A SINGLE HARMONIC EXPLOSION...

"I SAW A PEBBLE, TOSSED INTO A POND, RIPPLING OUT IN PERFECT CONCENTRIC PATTERNS.

"I FOLLOWED THE SPOOR OF THE YETI...

"I LIFTED THE COLUMNS OF THE ACROPOLIS IN FEAR AND HONOR OF THE GODS...

"I KNEW THE HUBRIS OF OUR ANCESTORS AS THEY LOOKED DOWN ON THESE OFFERINGS...

"I SAW A GREAT SHIP, ITS RUDDER GONE, SIDES SPLIT ASUNDER BY A TREACHEROUS REEF...

"I WAS THE REEF, A COMPLETE ECOSYSTEM WELCOMING THE SHIP'S CREW TO MY WATERY BOSOM...

"I FELT THE MOTHER BOX, AND UNDERSTOOD HER COMMUNION WITH NATURE...

PING!

PING!

"...HER CONNECTION TO THE VEGETABLE...

"AND HIS CONNECTION TO EARTH.

"I SAW HIS FACE SCREAMING AS THE MADNESS OVERCAME HIM...

"I SAW MY FACE..."

"I SAW YOUR FACE, SIRE."
HAH!
BY MY BROW, METRON, YOU ACADEMIC CHICKEN-- YOU'VE NOT ENTERED THE SOURCE AT ALL! THAT TRANSMUTER HOODWINKED YOU WITH AN ALEPH!
ALEPH'S ARE POINTS FROM WHICH ONE CAN OBSERVE ALL OTHER POINTS IN TIME AND SPACE. THEY ARE CONSIDERED PARLOR TRICKS TO ANY SORCERER WORTHY OF HIS TRADE.
YOU'VE SPENT TOO MUCH TIME TRYING TO UNRAVEL THE PARADOXES OF REALITY, METRON, AND NOT PAID ENOUGH ATTENTION TO CABAL. LET ME WARN YOU-- THERE SHALL BE NO ROOM FOR INTELLECTUALS IN THIS UNIVERSE WHEN DARKSEID SOLVES THE ANTI-LIFE EQUATION.
A-AN ALEPH? THEN...THE SOURCE RETAINS ITS MYSTERY... AND I'VE NOTHING TO BARTER, SIRE... NOTHING I CAN OFFER IN TRADE FOR MORE OF THE X-ELEMENT...
NO MORE OF REGAINING MY REPUTATION THROUGH THE POWER OF MY MOBIUS CHAIR...
18

DESPAIR NOT, METRON.

I HAVE NEED OF OTHER TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE.. ANYTHING THAT MIGHT ASSIST WITH THE COMPUTATION OF THE ANTI-LIFE EQUATION...

BUT WHAT, SIRE? I'VE TOLD YOU EVERY-THING.

WELL, THIS VEGETABLE INTERESTS ME. HOW CAME SUCH A BEING INTO EXISTENCE? WHO IS HE?

A LEGEND PERHAPS?

WELL, HE DID COME FROM EARTH ORIGINALLY..

BEFORE HIS AURA DEPARTED FOR EARTH HE SPOKE OF HIS MANY ENEMIES THERE... ACCOUNTS THAT HAD TO BE SETTLED... A WOMAN HE FANCIED.

IN TRUTH, HE WAS A STRANGE BEING, FILLED WITH THE KIND OF LONGINGS ONE ASSOCIATES WITH HUMANKIND.

I SENSED HE CARRIED GREAT POWER WITHIN HIM, AN ELEMENTAL POWER THAT OPERATED PERHARS ON A PLANETARY SCALE

YET YOU SAY HE WENT MAD..

TELL ME, WHAT WOULD CAUSE ONE SO POWERFUL TO LOSE HIS SANITY SO QUICKLY...

...SO EFFICIENTLY?

IT WAS WHAT HE SAW WHEN WE ENTERED THE ALEPH, SIRE.

IN FACT, MOTHER BOX HAD TO REMOVE ALL HIS MEMORIES OF THE EXPERIENCE IN ORDER FOR HIM TO FUNCTION WELL ENOUGH TO RETURN US TO NORMAL REALITY.

THEN SHE WOULD HAVE A RECORD OF WHAT THE VEGETABLE SAW AND FELT WHILE WITHIN THE ALEPH?

I SUPPOSE SHE WOULD, SIRE.

PING

PING

THEN I WOULD REVIEW THIS RECORD.

OF COURSE, SIRE'

IT-IT'S JUST THAT MOTHER BOX FEARS YOU SO -- SHE DOESN'T WANT TO TELL YOU ANYTHING.

P-PERHAPS IF I BYPASS HER EMOTIONAL CIRCUITS...

PING

PING

PING

PING

PING

"THE IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER, SIRE, IS THAT IN THE OVERWHELMING PLETHORA OF IMAGES THAT CONFRONTED US IN THE ALEPH, WE COULD ONLY FOCUS UPON A SELECT FEW. IN THE CASE OF THE WISEPABLE, WHEN GIVEN THE ABILITY TO LOOK IN ON ANYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE, HE CHOSE TO VIEW THE ONE ELEMENT OF HIS EXISTENCE THAT WAS OF GREATEST IMPORT TO HIM..."

"ABBY...MY LOVE...

"I CAN SEE YOUR...WHOLE LIFE...SPREAD OUT BEFORE ME...

"I SEE YOU AS A CHILD...IN THE ARMS...OF YOUR FATHER...

"AS A VICTIM...OF YOUR UNCLE'S BLASPHEMOUS EVIL. OH, ABBY.

"WHY CAN'T I TOUCH YOU...?

"YOUR LIFE...HAS GONE ON. WHILE I STAND LIKE A VOYEUR...ON THE EDGE OF...INFINITY.

ACID RAIN

"THERE'S SO MUCH...THAT I NEVER KNEW, ABBY...

"DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW..

"THERE YOU ARE...WAITING ON A CUSTOMER...IN THAT ALL-NIGHT DINER...

"YOU LOOK SO YOUNG.

Menu

"SLEEPING ALONE...SCRUNCHED UP...WITH A COPY OF..'THE SECRET LIFE OF PLANTS'...

The Secret

"BUT, OH, THE MOMENTS WE SOMEHOW SHARED...

"THE TINY...SLICES OF PARADISE...

"THE TWISTED...CORRIDORS... OF HELL...

"I... LOVE YOU, ABBY...

"I NEED YOU...

"FORGIVE ME, ABBY...

"SOMETIMES I DESPAIR...

"DESPAIR FOR...THE FUTURE.

"THE FUTURE... OUR FUTURE... TOGETHER?

"OH, PLEASE...

"EMBRACING YOU? YOUR FULL LIPS BRUSHING MY OWN...?

"IN THE SWAMP.. FREE FROM ALL PRYING...?

"IS IT POSSIBLE?

"A WHITE HAND... SLOWLY TURNING GREEN...

"I'M DIVING... FOR PEARLS IN AN OCEAN OF EMERALD.. LIGHT.

"I SEE YOU LOST.. BUT HAPPY... LAUGHING... THERE IS NO DANGER...

"NOTHING TO FEAR...

"THE WHITE HAND... NOW EMERALD.. GRASPING THE YOUNG SHOOT...

"CONSTANTINE...?

"A CARNIVOROUS PLANT... THE SIZE OF... A FOOTBALL STADIUM..

"...ABBY, WHAT ARE YOU AND CONSTANTINE..?

"THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES... DEMANDING..

"ABBY...?

"BUT I LOVE...

"A MAN... BURNING... RUNNING FOR THE SWAMPS.

"BURNING...

"A PARCHED... AND CHALKY HAND... NOW GREEN... PULLING THE SHOOT... OUT BY THE ROOTS...

"ANOTHER MAN BURNS...

"ABBY...

"THE GREEN DIMENSION... WITHERING... ROTTING... DROPPING AWAY PIECEMEAL.

"ABBY, YOUR LOVE...

"A WITCH DOCTOR... DEEP IN THE NEW GUINEA RAIN FOREST... GRINDING POWDERS IN A CEREMONIAL BOWL...

"YOUR LOVE...

"MORE BURNING... A WOMAN, SCREAMING...

"YOUR LOVE WAS ALL...

"MY NAME IS ALEC OLSEN... NO! HOLLAND..

"YOUR LOVE WAS ALL THAT KEPT ME...

"THE BURNING... NO-- PLEASE DON'T LET ME...

"ALL THAT KEPT ME...

"STOP THE BURNING.

"ALL THAT KEPT ME SANE..."

PING! PING! PING! PING! PING! PING! PING!

PING! PING!

PING
PING
PING
PING
PING

SO YOU SEE, SIRE, MOTHER BOX PROVIDES *NOTHING* BUT THE RAVINGS OF A SOUL IN *TORMENT*.

HOW CAN SUCH BE OF USE TO THE MASTER TORMENTOR HIMSELF?

BE NOT SO *QUICK* TO ACCEPT *DEFEAT*, METRON.

IT IS *UNBECOMING* OF A CELESTIAL... EVEN ONE WITH *YOUR* QUESTION-ABLE ETHICS...

TO DARKSEID THERE IS VALUE IN *ANY-THING* THAT CAN TURN A BEING OF SUCH POWER INTO *QUIVERING JELLY*.

PING?

I THINK WE OWE THIS MOTHER BOX A *DEBT* FOR *RELIEVING* HIS DEMENTIA, AND PRESERVING A *RECORD* OF IT, *FOR US*.

HERE, METRON. TAKE YOUR PRECIOUS X-ELEMENT. GO BACK TO YOUR EXPLORATIONS.

JUST BE SURE THAT WHEN YOU *ACTUALLY* BREAK THE FINAL BARRIER, YOU REMEMBER YOUR *BENEFACTORS*.

SIRE!

AND YOU, LITTLE MOTHER BOX... YOU FEAR ME, DO YOU?

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THAT DARKSEID IS A DODDERING OLD FOOL WHO SPENDS HIS DAYS WORKING HIS *CYPHER*?

PING

THAT'S RIGHT... ADDING, SUBTRACTING, MULTIPLYING, DIVIDING...

BUT IT DOESN'T ADD UP.
PING!
I FEAR THIS: AS LONG AS THE ANTI-LIFE EQUATION IS UNSOLVED, AS LONG AS A SCRAP OF FREE WILL EXISTS ANYWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE--
666
666
THEN DARKSEID REMAINS UNFULFILLED.
THERE ARE SO MANY VARIABLES IN MY CYPHER, SO MUCH THAT STILL ELUDES MY RECKONING...
THAT IS WHY I AM GRATEFUL TO METRON... AND TO THE VEGETABLE ...AND YES, EVEN TO YOU, LITTLE MOTHER BOX...
YOU HAVE EXPOSED ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL ROOTS OF MADNESS...
AND THUS ADDED AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT TO THE ANTI-LIFE EQUATION.
PING!
PING!
AN ELEMENT THAT HAD ESCAPED ME UNTIL NOW...
ONE FOR WHICH DARKSEID WAS NOT CAPABLE OF ANTICIPATING.
SQUAWKK!
LOVE.
NEXT: LOOSE ENDS (REPRISED)
23

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NEW FORMAT
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
SWAMP THING
BY MOORE, VEITCH & ALCALA

KEN? WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*?

NOTHING, JUST THOUGHT I SAW A LOOSE END OF THREAD ON YOUR SKIRT THERE..

LIAR I KNOW WHAT YOU WERE DOING!

ANNETTE, WE'VE BEEN DATING FOR WEEKS. ALL THAT *RELIGIOUS* STUFF, WAITING 'TIL YOU'RE MARRIED, IT'S *STUPID*.

I *KNOW*. AND I WANT TO, YOU KNOW THAT, BUT THERE'S *OTHER* REASONS.

LIKE *WHAT*? HEY, HELP ME UNDO THIS...

YOU GOTTA LIFT AND TWIST..

WELL, THERE'S *PSYCHOLOGICAL* REASONS. FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE IS REAL *IMPORTANT*. IF IT'S *BAD*, I COULD BE EMOTIONALLY *DAMAGED*. GROW UP A *LESBIAN* OR SOMETHING.

BABY, NOTHING WILL HAPPEN REALLY--

THERE..

FWUFF

SSZZZZZZSSSSS

M-MAYBE IF WE WAIT 'TIL WE'RE *ENGAGED*...

AAAAAAA! *AAAAAAAA*

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DIVING ACROSS A GALAXY, DOWN, DOWN, THROUGH STARS AND STARS AND STARS AND FINALLY CLOUDS, THE ROLLING LAND-OCEAN BELOW APPROACHING FAST AS A TRAIN, BECOMING BIGGER, BECOMING EVERYTHING UNTIL HE BREAKS, NO, SHATTERS THE SURFACE, A SOLID SPLASH...

...PENETRATING LUKEWARM TOPSOIL, PAST THE WORM-SHOALS, SHIMMERING, WRITHING IN THE SHALLOWS, PLUNGING DEEPER, THROUGH THE THRILLING COLD STREAMS OF THE CLAYBEDS AND OH, OH THE FEELING AND HE IS HOME...

FINALLY, HOME.

ABOVE GREAT GEOLOGIC WAVES OF EARTH AND ROCK RACE IMPERCEPTIBLY CROSS-CONTINENT TO BREAK, PERHAPS, A MILLION YEARS FROM NOW, AGAINST THE SEA.

ABOVE, THE TREESTUMPS RADIATE PALE TENDRILS, ROTTEN STAIRS BENEATH WHICH SKELETONS OF CATS AND HORSES HANG SUSPENDED IN THE STEAD OF CLOUDS. THE COAL SEAM IS A REEF OF JET, ITS PLATES PRECARIOUSLY STACKED, LIKE DIRTY DISHES, AND, BELOW THAT, MONSTERS, MONSTERS AND THEIR FOOTPRINTS BEFORE MILES OF STONE AND ULTIMATELY FIRE.

THE BURIED RIVERBED'S A PEBBLE RIBBON WHERE THE FISHBONES HOVER, DREAMING OF THEIR FORMER LIVES, AND THERE, AMONGST THE KEELS OF ROCKS, HE THINKS OF HER, THE IMPRINT OF THEIR LAST EMBRACE A CHERISHED BRUISE UPON HIS SPIRIT, PURPLE STILL AND TENDER DESPITE ALL THE LONG AND HOLLOW MONTHS ALONE.

THEY'D RUN TOWARDS EACH OTHER, KISSED, EMBRACED, THEN HE HAD BURNED AS IF THE ARC-FLASH OF THEIR CONTACT HAD TRANSFORMED HIM INTO A THING OF ASH, INCINERATED BY HIS LOVE, BY HIS DESIRE, CONDEMNED TO A MAD AFTERLIFE BEYOND THE FURTHER STARS...

SWAMP THING

AMONGST THE KEELS OF ROCKS HE THINKS OF HER, AND OF THE MEN WHO'D KEPT HER FROM HIM...

OF A LOVE TOO LONG UNCONSUMMATED AND UNFINISHED WARS.

LOOSE ENDS (REPRISE)

ALAN MOORE . RICK VEITCH & ALFREDO ALCALA . KAREN BERGER
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THERE'S A GARDEN WHERE ILLNESSES GROW, RIPENING GRADUALLY TOWARDS RECOVERY OR DEATH...

THE CIRCLING LIGHTS OF AN AMBULANCE GROVE SCATTER RED BLOSSOM ON THE WET AND TWINKLING GRAVEL AT HER FEET AS SHE APPROACHES.

KEEP CLEAR
EMERGENCY
HICLES ONLY

AMBULANCE

TERREBONNE PARISH
GENERAL HOSPITAL

INSIDE, THE ACOUSTICS CHANGE, BECOMING HUSHED AND INFLATED, FILLED WITH WHISPERING DISTANCES WHERE COMFORTINGS AND CONDOLENCES MERGE INTO A SYMPATHETIC MURMUR OF FARAWAY RUSHES.

IN CASUALTY RECEPTION, POPPIES GROW UPON GAUZE, FIRST BLOOMS OF A CATASTROPHIC SPRING.

A CHLOROFORM-SCENTED BREEZE MOVES THROUGH THE FORMALDEHYDE TREES, BEARS THE MEASURED AND PLAINTIVE EVEN SONG OF THE HEART-MONITORS TO HER AS SHE WALKS PAST THE WARDS WITH THEIR COTS IN CORNFIELD ROWS, AWAITING HARVEST...

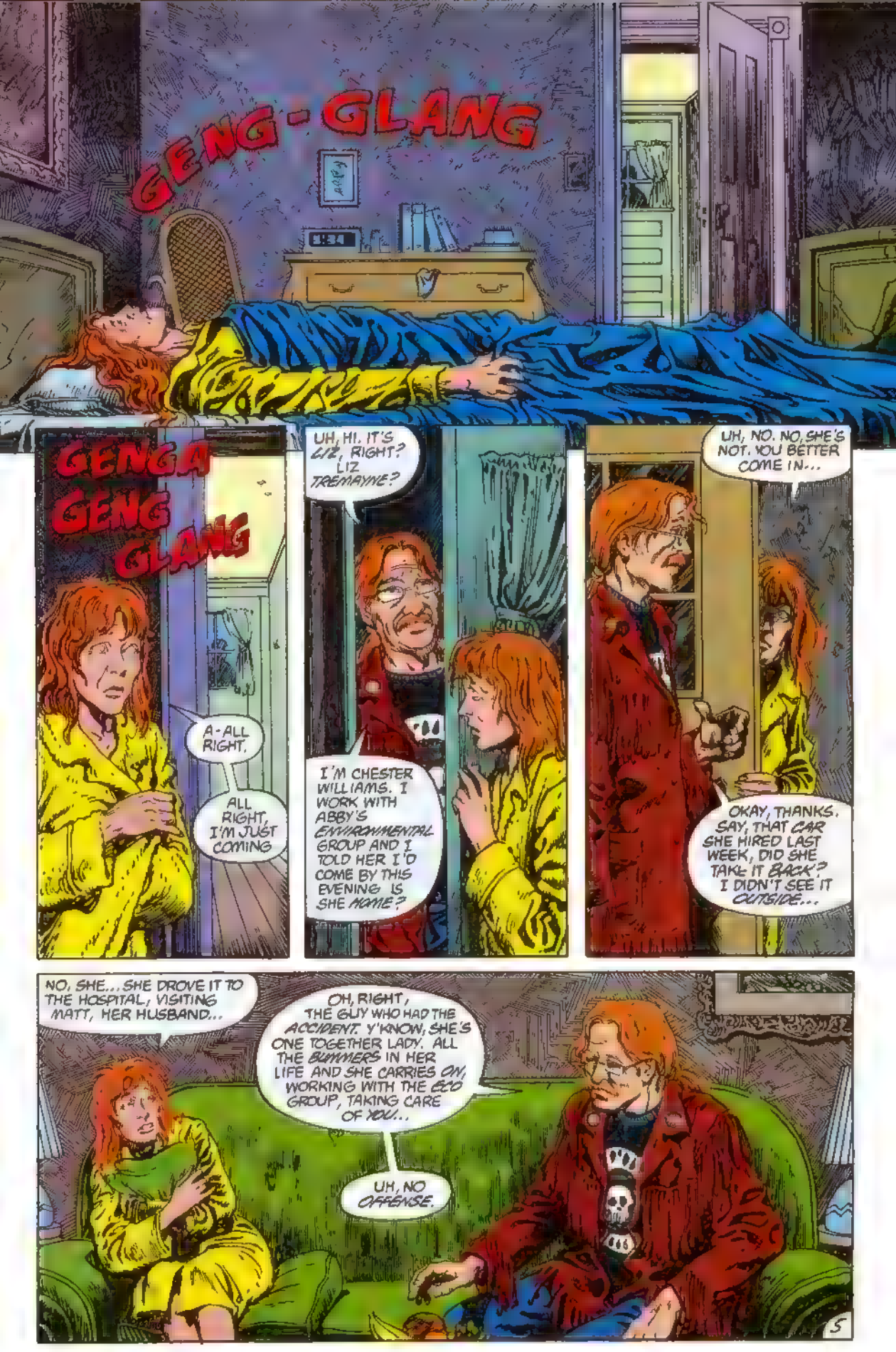
...FINALLY REACHING THE CELLAR-CULTURES, STILL AND LIGHT-STARVED IN THEIR BEDS, PALE FLESH SUBTLY LUMINOUS LIKE THAT OF MUSHROOMS.

ON HER EARLIEST VISITS SHE'D TRIED TO PROVOKE SOME RESPONSE. IF HE SPOKE NOW, SHE'D ALMOST BE FRIGHTENED.

DEAD IN ALL BUT NAME, WANDERING LOST SOMEWHERE AMONGST THE STEEP GREEN HILLS SKETCHED ON HIS EEG SCREEN.

HIS BODY'S THE GRAVE OF HIS MIND, ROOTED THERE, TRANSLUCENT STALKS RISE FROM VEIN AND NOSTRIL INTO GLASS FLOWERS. CONTAINING GLUCOSE TO LURE [redacted]

IF TOUCHED, THEY CHIME, BRIEF AND MELANCHOLY.


GENG-GLANG
GENGA GENG GLANG
A-ALL RIGHT.
ALL RIGHT, I'M JUST COMING
UH, HI. IT'S LIZ, RIGHT? LIZ TREMAYNE?
I'M CHESTER WILLIAMS. I WORK WITH ABBY'S ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP AND I TOLD HER I'D COME BY THIS EVENING. IS SHE HOME?
UH, NO. NO, SHE'S NOT. YOU BETTER COME IN...
OKAY, THANKS. SAY, THAT CAR SHE HIRED LAST WEEK, DID SHE TAKE IT BACK? I DIDN'T SEE IT OUTSIDE...
NO, SHE... SHE DROVE IT TO THE HOSPITAL, VISITING MATT, HER HUSBAND...
OH, RIGHT, THE GUY WHO HAD THE ACCIDENT. Y'KNOW, SHE'S ONE TOGETHER LADY. ALL THE BUMMERS IN HER LIFE AND SHE CARRIES ON, WORKING WITH THE ECO GROUP, TAKING CARE OF YOU...
UH, NO OFFENSE.
S

OH NO, NO, IT'S OKAY. SHE HELPS ME SO MUCH, I KNOW

YOU MUST THINK I'M PATHETIC.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

I DON'T HELP OUT ENOUGH, I'M USELESS WITH...

HEY! SLOW DOWN!

YOU'RE SOMEBODY WHO GOT *HEAD TRIPPED* REAL BAD, IS ALL. IT *HAPPENS*. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE PATHETIC.

Y-YOU DON'T?

NO WAY. YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL. YOU JUST HAVE TO MELLOW *OUT* A LITTLE.

ANYWAY, ABBY'S AT THE *HOSPITAL*. I OUGHTA TRUCK ON OVER THERE TO *MEET* HER.

YOU TAKE IT EASY, OKAY?

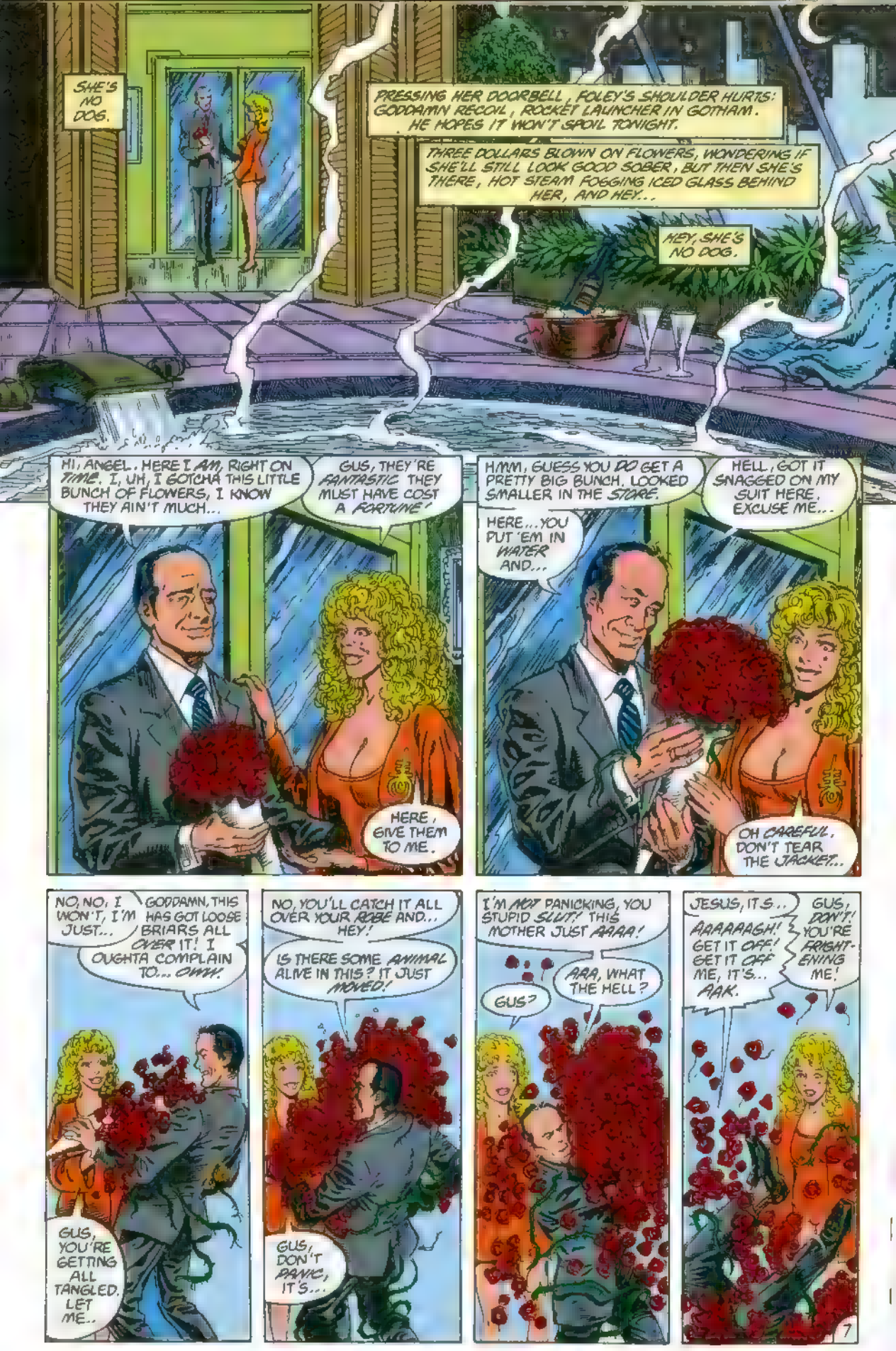
IN THE BATHROOM MIRROR SHE HAS A PLAIN WOMAN'S HAIR; A STAIN ON HER ROBE WHERE SHE SPILLED HER CEREAL...

TAKING ONE OF ABBY'S SUMMER DRESSES FROM THE CLOSET, SHE HOLDS IT FLAT TO HER BODY BEFORE REPLACING IT.

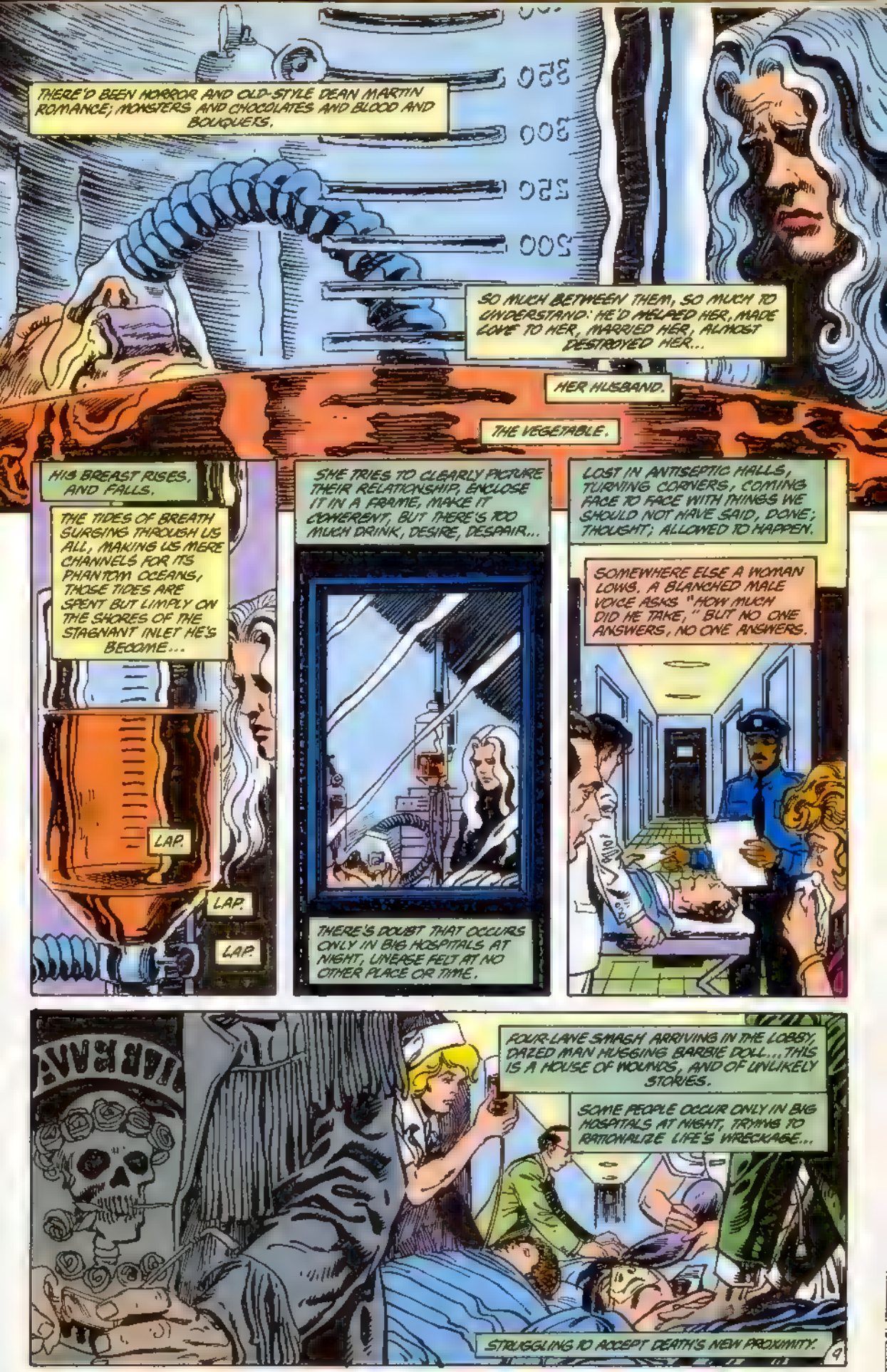
HEART HAMMERING, SHE RUNS A BATH, FOUR INCHES DEEP, AND SUMMONS THE COURAGE TO SIT. RECKLESSLY, SHE'S USED TOO MUCH BATH GELÉE. AS THE FOAM-DRIFT PILES AGAINST HER BACK SHE WONDERS IF YOU CAN DROWN IN BUBBLES, BUT DOES NOT SCREAM.

BEAUTIFUL.

HE SAID BEAUTIFUL.


SHE'S NO DOG.
PRESSING HER DOORBELL, FOLEY'S SHOULDER HURTS: GODDAMN RECOIL, ROCKET LAUNCHER IN GOTHAM. HE HOPES IT WON'T SPOIL TONIGHT.
THREE DOLLARS BLOWN ON FLOWERS, WONDERING IF SHE'LL STILL LOOK GOOD SOBER, BUT THEN SHE'S THERE, HOT STEAM FOGGING ICED GLASS BEHIND HER, AND HEY...
HEY, SHE'S NO DOG.
HI, ANGEL. HERE I AM, RIGHT ON TIME. I, UH, I GOTCHA THIS LITTLE BUNCH OF FLOWERS, I KNOW THEY AIN'T MUCH...
GUS, THEY'RE FANTASTIC THEY MUST HAVE COST A FORTUNE!
HERE, GIVE THEM TO ME.
HMM, GUESS YOU DO GET A PRETTY BIG BUNCH. LOOKED SMALLER IN THE STORE.
HELL, GOT IT SNAGGED ON MY SUIT HERE. EXCUSE ME...
HERE... YOU PUT 'EM IN WATER AND...
OH CAREFUL, DON'T TEAR THE JACKET...
NO, NO, I WON'T, I'M JUST...
GODDAMN, THIS HAS GOT LOOSE BRIARS ALL OVER IT! I OUGHTA COMPLAIN TO... OWW!
GUS, YOU'RE GETTING ALL TANGLED. LET ME..
NO, YOU'LL CATCH IT ALL OVER YOUR ROBE AND... HEY!
IS THERE SOME ANIMAL ALIVE IN THIS? IT JUST MOVED!
GUS, DON'T PANIC, IT'S...
I'M NOT PANICKING, YOU STUPID SLUT! THIS MOTHER JUST AAAA!
GUS?
AAA, WHAT THE HELL?
JESUS, IT'S..
GUS, DON'T! YOU'RE FRIGHTENING ME!
AAAAAAGH! GET IT OFF! GET IT OFF ME, IT'S... AAK.
7

FOR GOD'S SAKE, I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING!
OH. OH NO.
IT'S MOVING AAAOW CHRIST...
NO NO NO NO NO...
I...OH GOD, I KNOW! I KNOW WHAT... AAAAA
I KNOW WHAT IT IS! GET D.D.I.! GET WICKER. TELL...
AAAAEEEEGH!
TELL HIM... AAOOOOOHH...
TELL HIM IT'S BACK. TELL HIM IT'S STILL ALIII


THERE'D BEEN HORROR AND OLD-STYLE DEAN MARTIN ROMANCE; MONSTERS AND CHOCOLATES AND BLOOD AND BOUQUETS.
SO MUCH BETWEEN THEM, SO MUCH TO UNDERSTAND: HE'D HELPED HER, MADE LOVE TO HER, MARRIED HER, ALMOST DESTROYED HER...
HER HUSBAND.
THE VEGETABLE.
HIS BREAST RISES, AND FALLS.
THE TIDES OF BREATH SURGING THROUGH US ALL, MAKING US MERE CHANNELS FOR ITS PHANTOM OCEANS, THOSE TIDES ARE SPENT BUT LIMPLY ON THE SHORES OF THE STAGNANT INLET HE'S BECOME...
LAP.
LAP.
LAP.
SHE TRIES TO CLEARLY PICTURE THEIR RELATIONSHIP, ENCLOSE IT IN A FRAME, MAKE IT COHERENT, BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH DRINK, DESIRE, DESPAIR...
THERE'S DOUBT THAT OCCURS ONLY IN BIG HOSPITALS AT NIGHT, UNEASE FELT AT NO OTHER PLACE OR TIME.
LOST IN ANTISEPTIC HALLS, TURNING CORNERS, COMING FACE TO FACE WITH THINGS WE SHOULD NOT HAVE SAID, DONE; THOUGHT; ALLOWED TO HAPPEN.
SOMEWHERE ELSE A WOMAN LOWS. A BLANCHED MALE VOICE ASKS "HOW MUCH DID HE TAKE," BUT NO ONE ANSWERS, NO ONE ANSWERS.
FOUR-LANE SMASH ARRIVING IN THE LOBBY, DAZED MAN HUGGING BARBIE DOLL... THIS IS A HOUSE OF WOUNDS, AND OF UNLIKELY STORIES.
SOME PEOPLE OCCUR ONLY IN BIG HOSPITALS AT NIGHT, TRYING TO RATIONALIZE LIFE'S WRECKAGE...
STRUGGLING TO ACCEPT DEATH'S NEW PROXIMITY.
4

I'M SORRY, MR. WILLIAMS, BUT OUR COMPUTER LISTS NO "MATT CAMBELL"!

THAT'S CABLE. C-A-B-L...

...STRAIGHT DOWN THE CORRIDOR AND ACROSS THE INTERSECTION. MRS. MONROE IS AT THE END.

UH, EXCUSE ME A MOMENT, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

INFORMA

WALLACE? WALLACE MONROE?

HEY MAN, SYNCHRONICITY! YOU REMEMBER ME?

CHESTER WILLIAMS. WE MET UP IN GOTHAM LAST FALL.

WHY YES.

YES, I REMEMBER. YOU GAVE ME THAT SLICE OF SWEET POTATO TO GIVE TO MY WIFE. HOW STRANGE RUNNING INTO YOU NOW.

WELL, I'M JUST HERE LOOKING FOR SOMEBODY.

UHH..HOW IS YOUR WIFE?

DYING. BUT I GOT UP THE COURAGE TO COME SEE HER A COUPLE OF TIMES. GAVE HER YOUR PIECE OF YAM, TOLD HER TO TRY IT IF THINGS GOT BAD.

WOW.

DID SHE TAKE IT?

9! 104

WELL, THE HOSPITAL CALLED TODAY AND SAID SHE'D LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT SEEMED ECSTATIC, MUMBLING ABOUT LIGHT AND ANGELS AND JESUS.

I HOPE SHE TOOK IT, HOPE I EASED HER SUFFERING.

UROLOGY→

BUT THEN, I REMEMBER THE POISON KILLING HER, THE POISON I HELPED SPREAD, AND I KNOW IT'S NOT ENOUGH.

HAZARD

DEPT. OF RADIOLOGY

THEY SAID I SHOULD COME *QUICKLY*, THAT SHE MAY NOT HAVE *LONG*...

I'D NEED *DECADES* TO MEND THE DAMAGE I'VE DONE.

DO NOT D STURB

UHH, WELL, MAYBE YOU [redacted]'T WANNA THINK ABOUT THIS RIGHT *NOW*, BUT I'M IN THIS GROUP TRYING TO MEND *ENVIRONMENTAL* DAMAGE.

HERE'S OUR NUMBER.

UH...WELL, THANK YOU. PERHAPS I'LL CALL.

I MEAN, I'M EXPECTING A LOT OF TIME TO MYSELF QUITE *SOON*.

UH... SURE. WELL, LOOK, YOU TAKE *CARE* NOW. NICE SEEING YOU AGAIN, MAN.

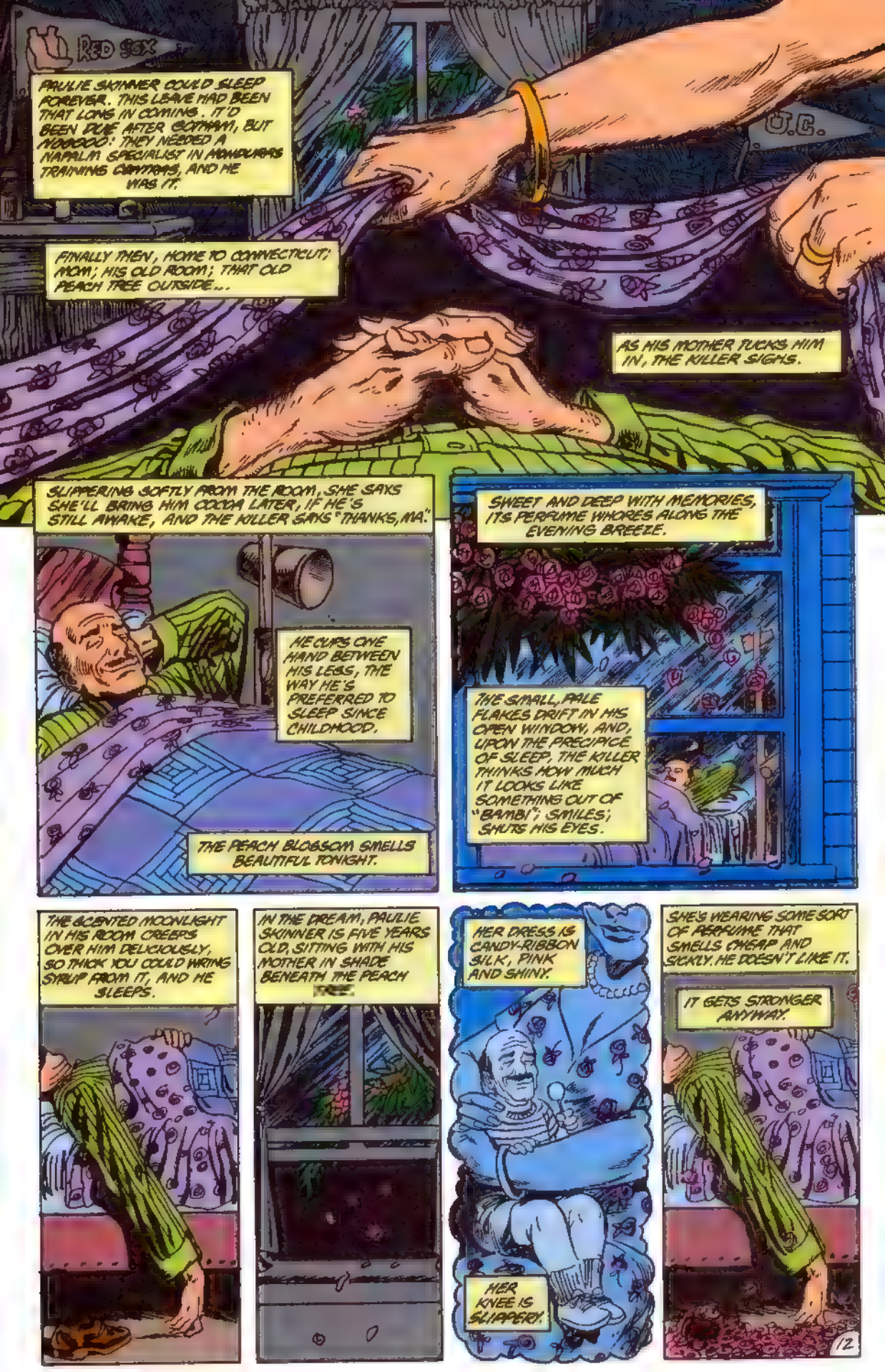
HOPE EVERYTHING'S OKAY WITH THE *WIFE*.

TREASURE?

I'M *SORRY*, MR. MONROE, WE TRIED TO CALL YOU, BUT YOU'D ALREADY LEFT THE HOUSE.

SHE WOKE BRIEFLY. SHE SAID TO TELL YOU SHE WAS SORRY SHE COULDN'T *WAIT*, AND TO THANK YOU FOR *SHOWING* HER SO MUCH.

SHE SAID TO TELL YOU "*GOODNIGHT*."

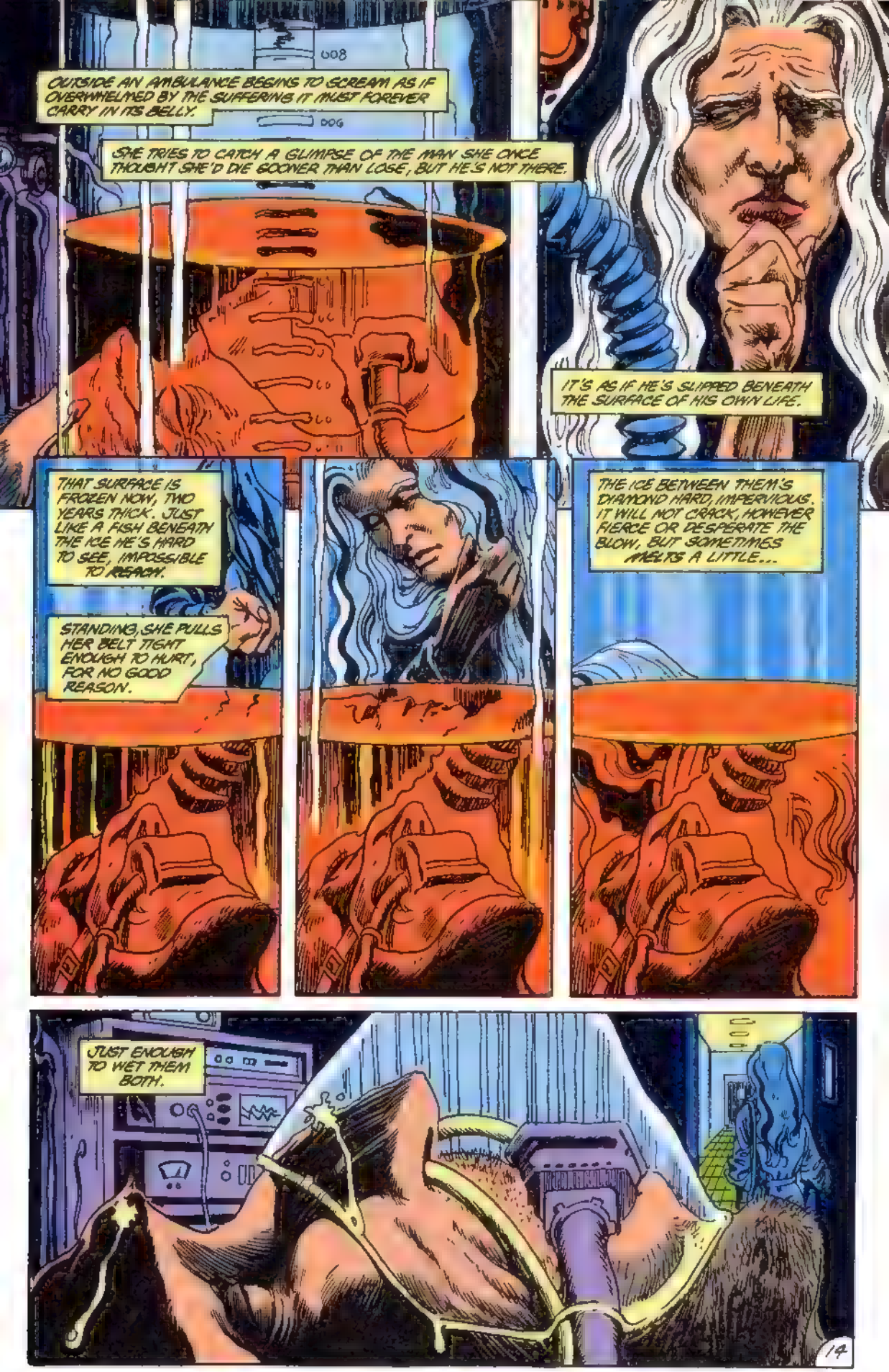

RED SOX
PAULIE SKINNER COULD SLEEP FOREVER. THIS LEAVE HAD BEEN THAT LONG IN COMING. IT'D BEEN DUE AFTER GOTHAM, BUT WOOOOO: THEY NEEDED A NAPALM SPECIALIST IN HONDURAS TRAINING CONTRAS, AND HE WAS IT.
FINALLY THEN, HOME TO CONNECTICUT: MOM; HIS OLD ROOM; THAT OLD PEACH TREE OUTSIDE...
AS HIS MOTHER TUCKS HIM IN, THE KILLER SIGHS.
SLIPPERING SOFTLY FROM THE ROOM, SHE SAYS SHE'LL BRING HIM COCOA LATER, IF HE'S STILL AWAKE, AND THE KILLER SAYS "THANKS, MA".
HE CUPS ONE HAND BETWEEN HIS LEGS, THE WAY HE'S PREFERRED TO SLEEP SINCE CHILDHOOD.
THE PEACH BLOSSOM SMELLS BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT.
SWEET AND DEEP WITH MEMORIES, ITS PERFUME WHORES ALONG THE EVENING BREEZE.
THE SMALL, PALE FLAKES DRIFT IN HIS OPEN WINDOW, AND, UPON THE PRECIPICE OF SLEEP, THE KILLER THINKS HOW MUCH IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF "BAMBI"; SMILES; SHUTS HIS EYES.
THE SCENTED MOONLIGHT IN HIS ROOM CREEPS OVER HIM DELICIOUSLY, SO THICK YOU COULD WRING SYRUP FROM IT, AND HE SLEEPS.
IN THE DREAM, PAULIE SKINNER IS FIVE YEARS OLD, SITTING WITH HIS MOTHER IN SHADE BENEATH THE PEACH
HER DRESS IS CANDY-RIBBON SILK, PINK AND SHINY.
HER KNEE IS SLIPPERY.
SHE'S WEARING SOME SORT OF PERFUME THAT SMELLS CHEAP AND SICKLY. HE DOESN'T LIKE IT.
IT GETS STRONGER ANYWAY.
12

HE TRIES TO WRIGGLE AWAY BUT SHE PULLS HIM CLOSER. HIS HANDS SINK INTO THE PINK SILK PLUMPNESS OF HER BODY, BONELESS AS A CUSHION...

THE PERFUME IS EVERYWHERE NOW.

HELL-O-OOO? PAULIE, 'R YOU STILL AWAKE?

I BROUGHT YOU SOME COCOA, LIKE I PRO...


OUTSIDE AN AMBULANCE BEGINS TO SCREAM AS IF OVERWHELMED BY THE SUFFERING IT MUST FOREVER CARRY IN ITS BELLY.
SHE TRIES TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE MAN SHE ONCE THOUGHT SHE'D DIE SOONER THAN LOSE, BUT HE'S NOT THERE.
IT'S AS IF HE'S SLIPPED BENEATH THE SURFACE OF HIS OWN LIFE.
THAT SURFACE IS FROZEN NOW, TWO YEARS THICK. JUST LIKE A FISH BENEATH THE ICE HE'S HARD TO SEE, IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH.
STANDING, SHE PULLS HER BELT TIGHT ENOUGH TO HURT, FOR NO GOOD REASON.
THE ICE BETWEEN THEM'S DIAMOND HARD, IMPERVIOUS. IT WILL NOT CRACK, HOWEVER FIERCE OR DESPERATE THE BLOW, BUT SOMETIMES MELTS A LITTLE...
JUST ENOUGH TO WET THEM BOTH.

HEY! ABBY! I FINALLY CONNECTED WITH YOU!

LIZ TOLD ME YOU WERE HERE. I FIGURED I'D COME OVER.

HOW'S THINGS WITH YOUR, UH, YOUR EX-HUSBAND?

ALL VISIT MU REGI A DES

OH, WELL, HE TOLD ME ABOUT THE MOVIES HE'D SEEN, AND WE DISCUSSED POLITICS AND HE SAID HE LIKED MY OUTFIT...

REALLY?

NO.

LOOK, I'M SORRY. SINCE ALEC DIED, COMING HERE TO SEE MATT, I JUST FEEL EMPTY, LIKE I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH STUFF TO MOURN BOTH OF THEM.

DO YOU MIND IF WE SKIP THE ECO-BUSINESS TONIGHT? I WANT TO DRIVE OUT TO THE SWAMPS.

YOU WANT TO BE ALONE?

ALONE?

CHESTER, LATELY I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH OLD PEOPLE, WHOSE KIDS HAVE STUCK THEM IN A HOME WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE THEY DON'T KNOW AND I JUST THINK "CHRIST," YOU KNOW?

NO...

NO, I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE.

TERREBONNE GENERAL HOSPITAL AMBULANCE

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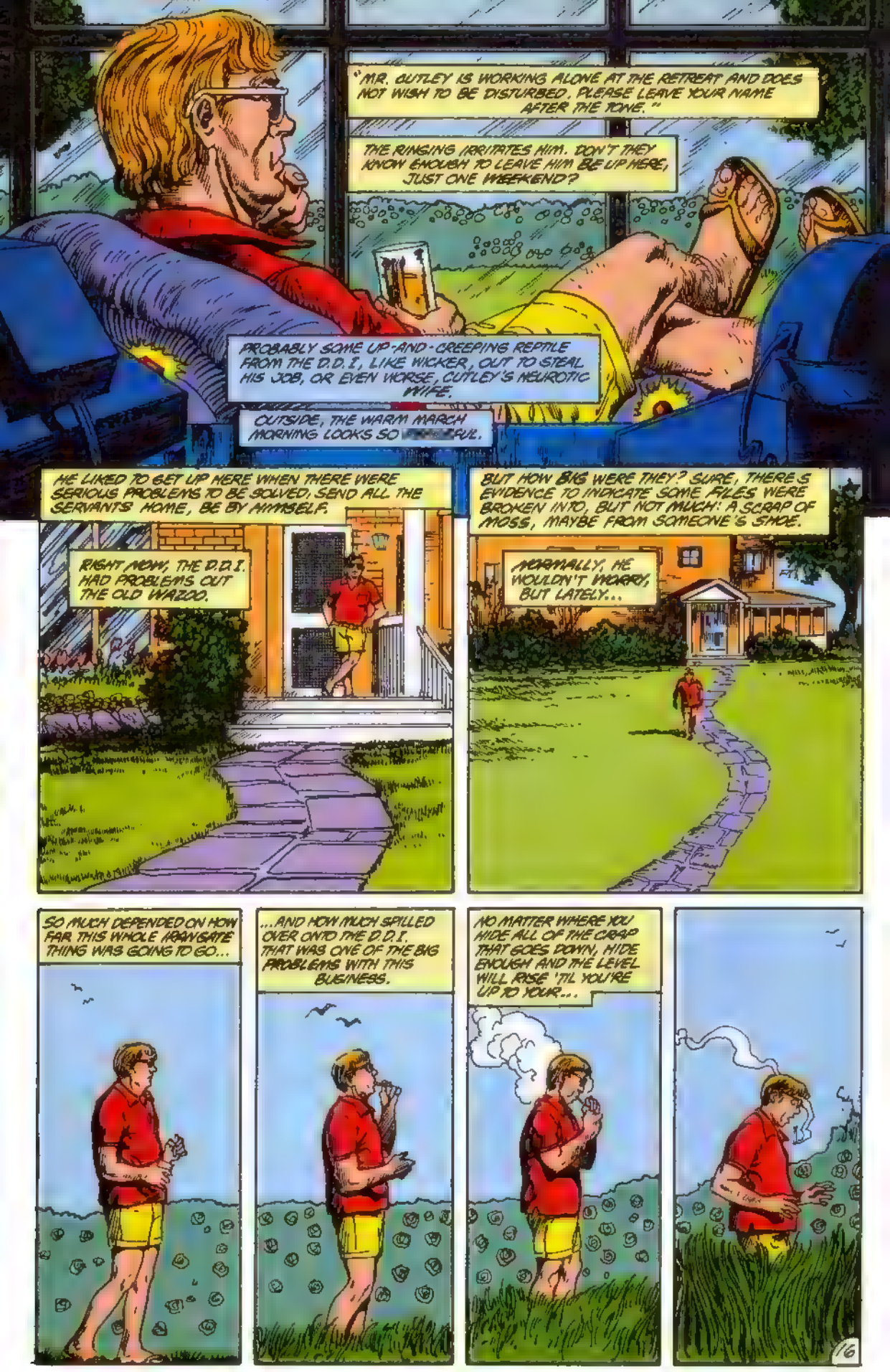

"MR. CUTLEY IS WORKING ALONE AT THE RETREAT AND DOES NOT WISH TO BE DISTURBED. PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AFTER THE TONE."
THE RINGING IRRITATES HIM. DON'T THEY KNOW ENOUGH TO LEAVE HIM BE UP HERE, JUST ONE WEEKEND?
PROBABLY SOME UP-AND-CREEPING REPTILE FROM THE D.D.I., LIKE WICKER, OUT TO STEAL HIS JOB, OR EVEN WORSE, CUTLEY'S NEUROTIC WIFE.
OUTSIDE, THE WARM MARCH MORNING LOOKS SO [illegible]FUL.
HE LIKED TO GET UP HERE WHEN THERE WERE SERIOUS PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED; SEND ALL THE SERVANTS HOME, BE BY HIMSELF.
RIGHT NOW, THE D.D.I. HAD PROBLEMS OUT THE OLD WAZOO.
BUT HOW BIG WERE THEY? SURE, THERE'S EVIDENCE TO INDICATE SOME FILES WERE BROKEN INTO, BUT NOT MUCH: A SCRAP OF MOSS, MAYBE FROM SOMEONE'S SHOE.
NORMALLY, HE WOULDN'T WORRY, BUT LATELY...
SO MUCH DEPENDED ON HOW FAR THIS WHOLE IRANGATE THING WAS GOING TO GO...
...AND HOW MUCH SPILLED OVER ONTO THE D.D.I. THAT WAS ONE OF THE BIG PROBLEMS WITH THIS BUSINESS.
NO MATTER WHERE YOU HIDE ALL OF THE CRAP THAT GOES DOWN, HIDE ENOUGH AND THE LEVEL WILL RISE 'TIL YOU'RE UP TO YOUR...
16

HIS LAWN IS MAYBE FIFTEEN METERS SQUARE AND CUTLEY KNOWS EVERY FOOT OF IT...

BUT NOT VERTICALLY.

NOT WAITING, NOT DARING TO REFLECT UPON WHAT WAS OCCURRING, HE PUSHES THROUGH THE FLIMSY EMERALD CURTAIN SEEKING REASSURING CONCRETE...

...FINDING THORNS.

CALM. IN CONTROL. THOUGH ALL THE WORLD IS SUDDENLY BERSERK HE MUST STAY IN CONTROL. HE'D TRACE THE WALL ALONG, AND FIND ITS END...

A SUDDEN RIGHT ANGLE MAKES HIM TURN LEFT. HE FINDS AN OPENING IN THE BRIARS, STEPS THROUGH...

...CONTINUES UNTIL HE MEETS A WALL, TURNS RIGHT THEN PANICS AND TRIES TO RETRACE HIS STEPS.

SO: LEFT AND BACK TOWARDS THE BRIAR OPENING, WHICH WAS...

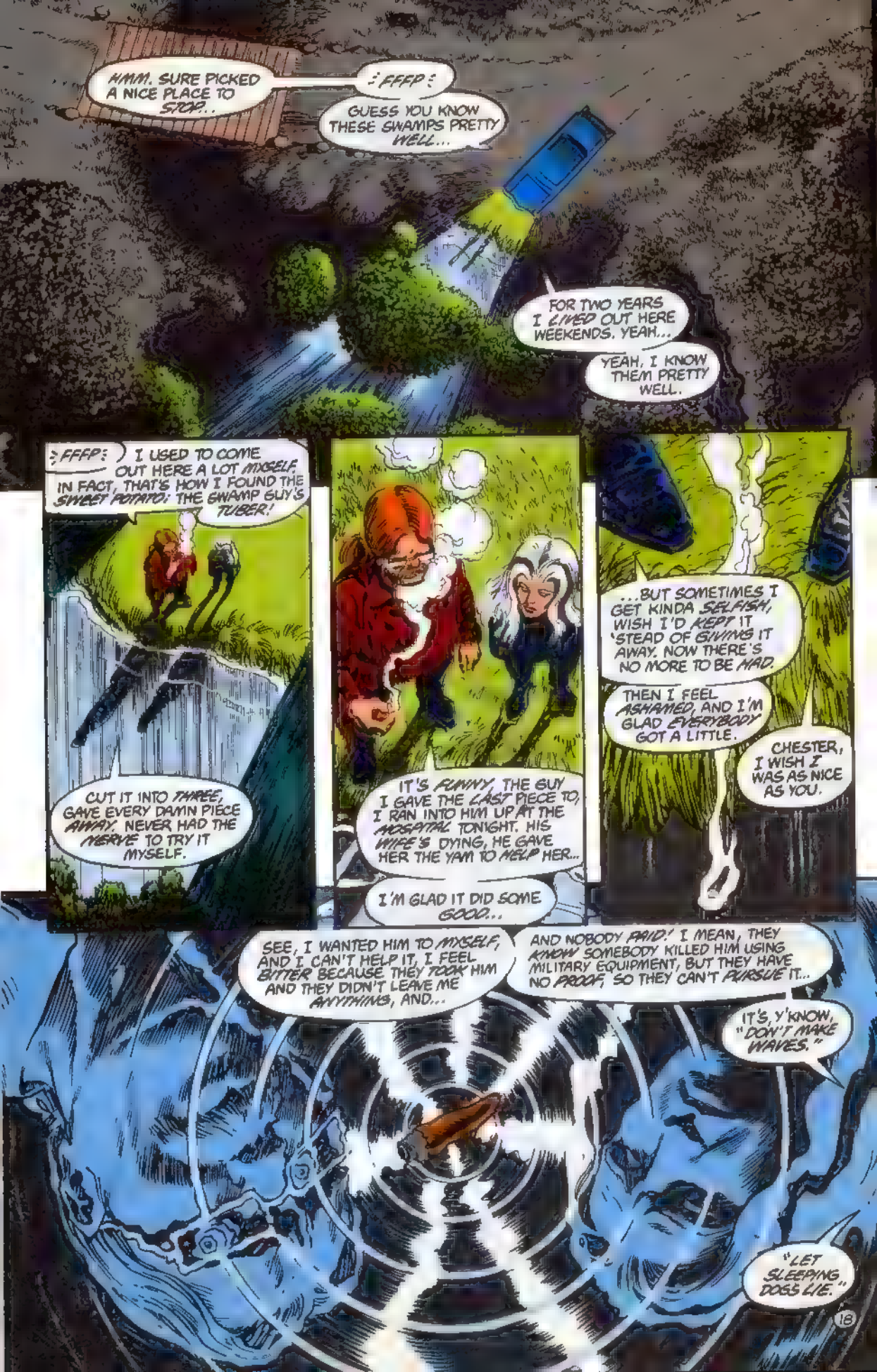
WHERE?

WHERE WAS IT? IT HAD BEEN THERE. IT COULDN'T HAVE CLOSED UP FOR GOD'S SAKE...

THE SERVANTS WOULDN'T BE BACK FOR A WEEK.

HIS LAWN IS MAYBE FIFTEEN METERS SQUARE. A MAN COULDN'T GET LOST ON HIS OWN LAWN!

INSIDE THE HOUSE THE PHONES KEEP RINGING, UNTIL, ONE BY ONE, THEY STOP.


HMM. SURE PICKED A NICE PLACE TO STOP..
:FFFP:
GUESS YOU KNOW THESE SWAMPS PRETTY WELL...
FOR TWO YEARS I LIVED OUT HERE WEEKENDS. YEAH...
YEAH, I KNOW THEM PRETTY WELL.
:FFFP: I USED TO COME OUT HERE A LOT MYSELF. IN FACT, THAT'S HOW I FOUND THE SWEET POTATO: THE SWAMP GUY'S TUBER!
CUT IT INTO THREE, GAVE EVERY DAMN PIECE AWAY. NEVER HAD THE NERVE TO TRY IT MYSELF.
IT'S FUNNY. THE GUY I GAVE THE LAST PIECE TO, I RAN INTO HIM UP AT THE HOSPITAL TONIGHT. HIS WIFE'S DYING, HE GAVE HER THE YAM TO HELP HER...
I'M GLAD IT DID SOME GOOD...
...BUT SOMETIMES I GET KINDA SELFISH, WISH I'D KEPT IT 'STEAD OF GIVING IT AWAY. NOW THERE'S NO MORE TO BE HAD.
THEN I FEEL ASHAMED, AND I'M GLAD EVERYBODY GOT A LITTLE.
CHESTER, I WISH I WAS AS NICE AS YOU.
SEE, I WANTED HIM TO MYSELF, AND I CAN'T HELP IT, I FEEL BITTER BECAUSE THEY TOOK HIM AND THEY DIDN'T LEAVE ME ANYTHING, AND...
AND NOBODY PAID! I MEAN, THEY KNOW SOMEBODY KILLED HIM USING MILITARY EQUIPMENT, BUT THEY HAVE NO PROOF, SO THEY CAN'T PURSUE IT...
IT'S, Y'KNOW, "DON'T MAKE WAVES."
"LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE."
18

MR. WICKER? IT'S 1:30. YOU TOLD US TO WAKE YOU WHEN WE BROUGHT IN YOUR CUMCH.

EHUH?

MR. WICKER, IS ALL THIS NECESSARY? WOULDN'T YOU BE MORE COMFORTABLE SLEEPING AT HOME?

LISSEN, SHUDDUPAMINUTE. LEMME...UHH...OKAY.

ONE THIRTY. GOOD. DID THEY REPLACE THE FRONT LAWN WITH ASTROTURF YET? I TOLD THEM NOON...

UH, WELL, LISTEN, ABOUT ALL THAT STUFF, Y'KNOW, THE LOBBY PLANTS, AND THE LAWN...

...IT SEEMS TO US, SIR, THAT... WELL, YOU'VE BEEN UNDER STRESS SINCE THE [redacted] BUSINESS, AND NOW THIS TROUBLE WITH POOR OLLIE MORTH...

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? GIVE ME THOSE SANDWICHES.

YOU'RE SAYING I'M NOT FIT TO DO MY JOB?

NOBODY'S SAYING THAT, SIR. BUT... WELL, KILLING ALL THE PLANTS AROUND H.Q....

DAMN STRAIGHT: METAL AND MICA AND PLASTIC FROM NOW ON, AND THAT'S IT, OKAY?

I MEAN, DON'T YOU SEE THE PATTERN? THE COMPUTER WAS BROKEN INTO, ALL THE DETAILS ABOUT GOTHAM...

AND THEN FOLEY! HAVE THE POLICE ALLOWED US ACCESS TO THE GIRL YET?

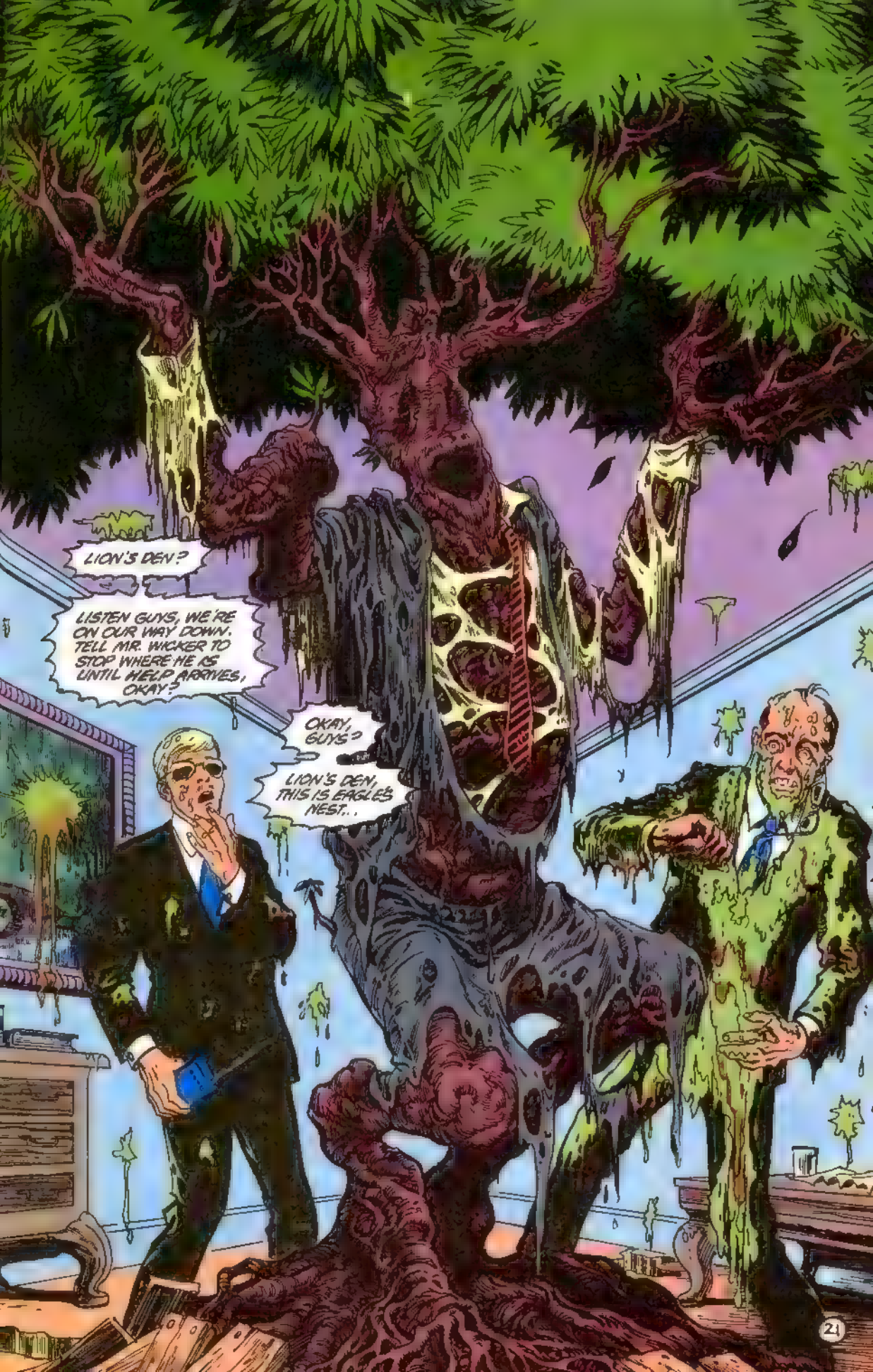
NO. THEY FOUND HER AND HER PIMP TRYING TO DITCH FOLEY'S BODY, BUT THEY CAN'T GET A STRAIGHT STORY FROM 'EM.

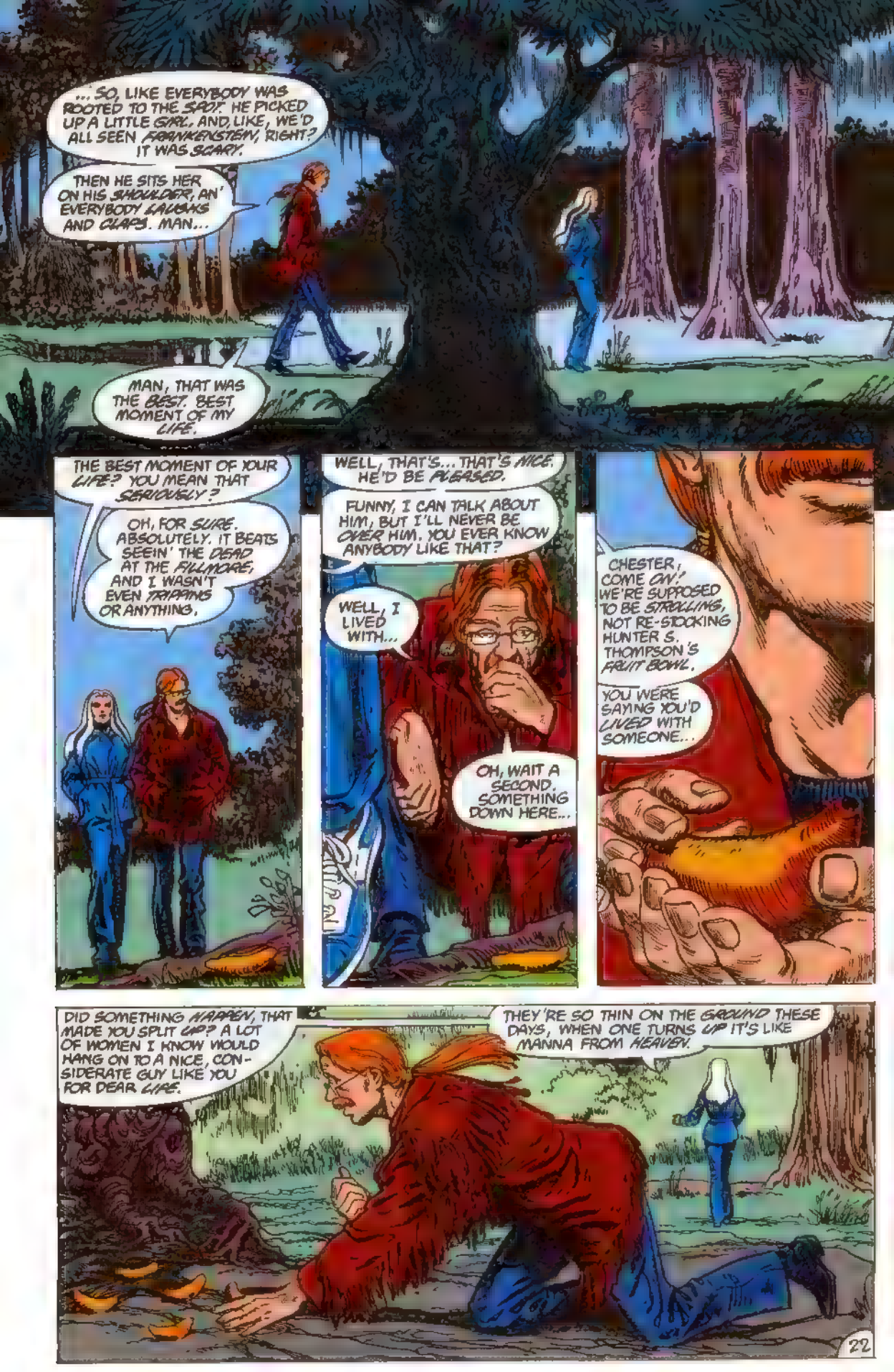
HA! I'LL BET THEY CAN'T!

:SNOF: AND WHAT ABOUT SKINNER? DROWNED IN BLOSSOM! FREAK ACCIDENT MY ASS! HAS ANYONE CONTACTED CUTLEY YET?

SIR, MR. CUTLEY'S AT THE RETREAT..

HE'S SORTING THROUGH THE RUBBLE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE TOWER REPORT, AND LEFT INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO BE DISTURBED.
HE HAS BEEN THERE FOUR DAYS NOW...
WELL, THAT'S NOT UNUSUAL, GIVEN THE SCALE OF THE CRISIS I'VE KNOWN TIMES IN THE PAST HE HASN'T ANSWERED THE PHONE ALL WEEK UP THERE.
HIS WIFE CALLED.
SHE DID? WHAT WAS IT THIS TIME? A PROWLER? A UFO? CHRIST, THEY OUGHTA GIVE HER STRONGER TABLETS.
SHE HAD A DREAM, ABOUT CUTLEY. WANTS US TO REACH HIM...
AAA, SHE'S AFRAID HE'S GOT SOME SECRETARY UP THERE AT THE RETREAT WITH HIM!
WELL, SHE SOUNDED WORRIED ABOUT HIM...
SHE SAID "PHONE HIM. TELL HIM NOT TO GET LOST. I DREAMED HE GOT LOST."
A WIFE LIKE THAT, I'D WANNA GET LOST
YOU DIDN'T HEAR HER. SHE...
WAIT A MINUTE, MAN.
MR WICKER? YOU OKAY?
EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT WITH YOUR LUNCH?
RON, LOOK OUT, HE'S...
HEY! HEY, MR. WICKER? WHAT'S THE MATTER? SIR, TELL US WHAT...
GMMH
EKKEHH
DON, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, SHOOT IT!
SHOOT WHAT? WHAT AM I GONNA SHOOT? OH CHRIST, OH JESUS, LOOK AT HIS SHIRT! WHAT'S...
AGHHEH
HELP, WE GOTTA GET HELP...
EAGLE'S NEST? EAGLE'S NEST THIS IS LION'S GODDAMN DEN. WE GOT ...OH JEEZ, JUST GET SOMEBODY DOWN HERE!
OH GOD. OH NO...
HHEEHHHGHH
HHHGGHHUHH
OH SH...
HELLO, LION'S DEN? LION'S DEN, THIS IS EAGLE'S NEST. DO YOU COPY?


LION'S DEN?
LISTEN GUYS, WE'RE ON OUR WAY DOWN. TELL MR. WICKER TO STOP WHERE HE IS UNTIL HELP ARRIVES, OKAY?
OKAY, GUYS?
LION'S DEN, THIS IS EAGLE'S NEST..


... SO, LIKE EVERYBODY WAS ROOTED TO THE SPOT. HE PICKED UP A LITTLE GIRL, AND, LIKE, WE'D ALL SEEN FRANKENSTEIN, RIGHT? IT WAS SCARY.
THEN HE SITS HER ON HIS SHOULDER, AN' EVERYBODY LAUGHS AND CLAPS. MAN...
MAN, THAT WAS THE BEST. BEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE.
THE BEST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE? YOU MEAN THAT SERIOUSLY?
OH, FOR SURE. ABSOLUTELY. IT BEATS SEEIN' THE DEAD AT THE FILLMORE, AND I WASN'T EVEN TRIPPING OR ANYTHING.
WELL, THAT'S... THAT'S NICE. HE'D BE PLEASED.
FUNNY, I CAN TALK ABOUT HIM, BUT I'LL NEVER BE OVER HIM. YOU EVER KNOW ANYBODY LIKE THAT?
WELL, I LIVED WITH...
OH, WAIT A SECOND. SOMETHING DOWN HERE...
CHESTER, COME ON! WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE STROLLING, NOT RE-STOCKING HUNTER S. THOMPSON'S FRUIT BOWL.
YOU WERE SAYING YOU'D LIVED WITH SOMEONE...
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN, THAT MADE YOU SPLIT UP? A LOT OF WOMEN I KNOW WOULD HANG ON TO A NICE, CONSIDERATE GUY LIKE YOU FOR DEAR LIFE.
THEY'RE SO THIN ON THE GROUND THESE DAYS, WHEN ONE TURNS UP IT'S LIKE MANNA FROM HEAVEN.

A-ABBY?

ABBY, I..I FOUND SOMETHING..

YEAH, WELL, I'M NOT *INTERESTED*. I ALREADY GOT A LIFE THAT MOST PEOPLE WOULD NEED DRUGS TO *IMAGINE*. I MEAN, WITH ACQUAINTANCES LIKE *MINE*, WHO NEEDS *HALLUCINATIONS*?

BUT... LOOK, I FOUND ALL *THESE*. IN THIS LIGHT, IT'S DIFFICULT TO BE *SURE*, BUT I THINK THEY LOOK LIKE...

SEE, THE *COLOR* IS THE SAME, AND THAT APRICOT, FUZZY SORT OF FEEL TO THE SKIN, BUT...

BUT, WELL, THESE *CAN'T* BE THE SAME TUBERS. EVEN IF HE DROPPED 'EM HERE ALL THAT *TIME* AGO...

I MEAN, THEY'D HAVE *ROTTED* BY NOW. BUT THEN THE *SMELL'S* SO SIMILAR... THAT STUFF THEY USE IN INDIAN *COOKERY*, TASTES KINDA *SOURED*. WHAT'S IT CALLED? I CAN'T...

UH, ABBY? WHAT'S...

OH.

OH *WOW*

ABBY, I... I THINK I'M HAVING SOME KIND OF *FLASH-BACK*.

OH JEEZ. THIS...

THIS IS REAL.

WHAT... WHAT *IS* IT? IS IT AN *EARTHQUAKE*? COME ON, WE GOTTA GET *OUT*. WE GOTTA...

ABBY! LOOK OUT, THE EARTH IS...

...IS...

ABBY?

NEXT:
RETURN OF THE GOOD GUMBO

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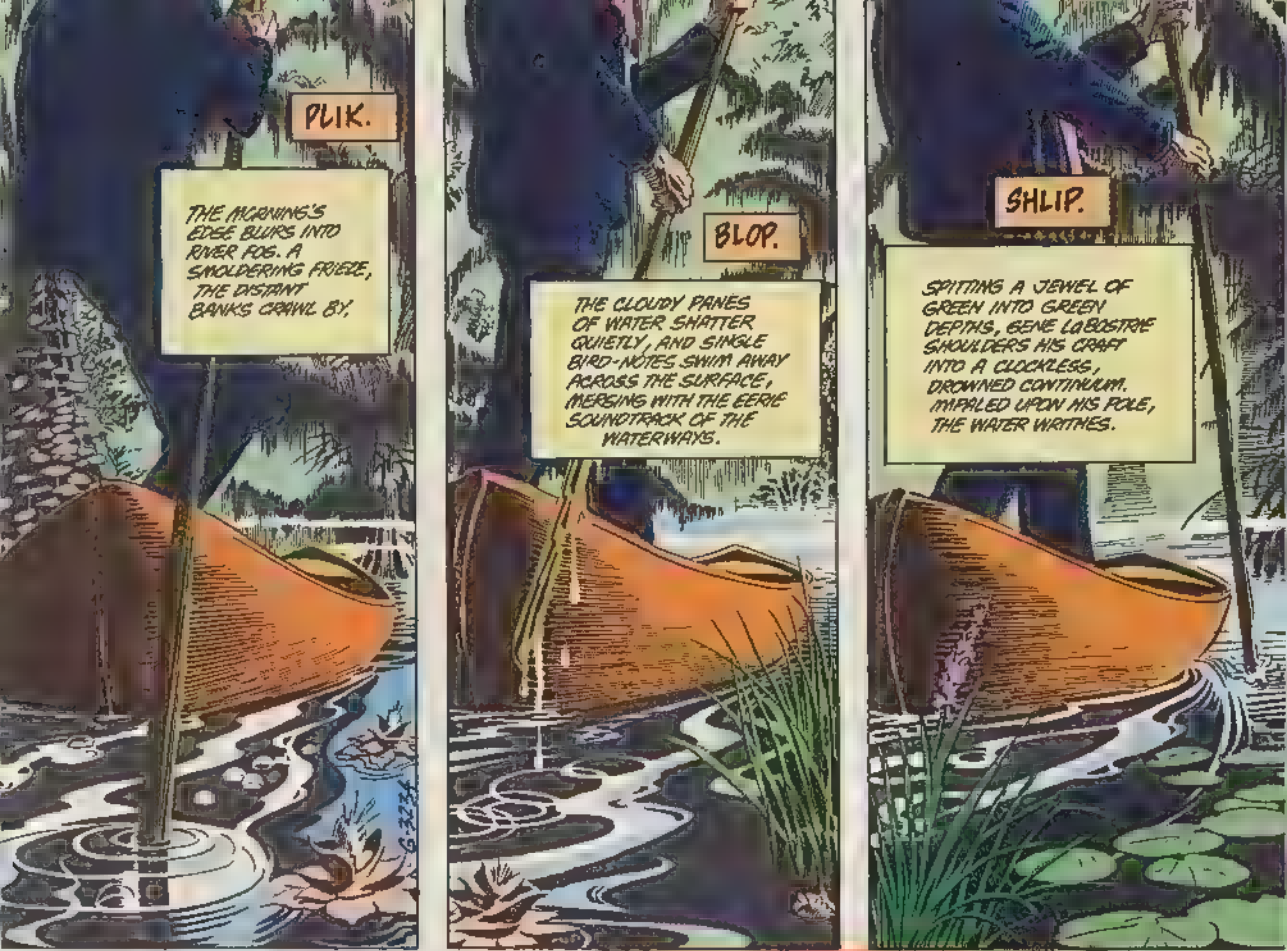
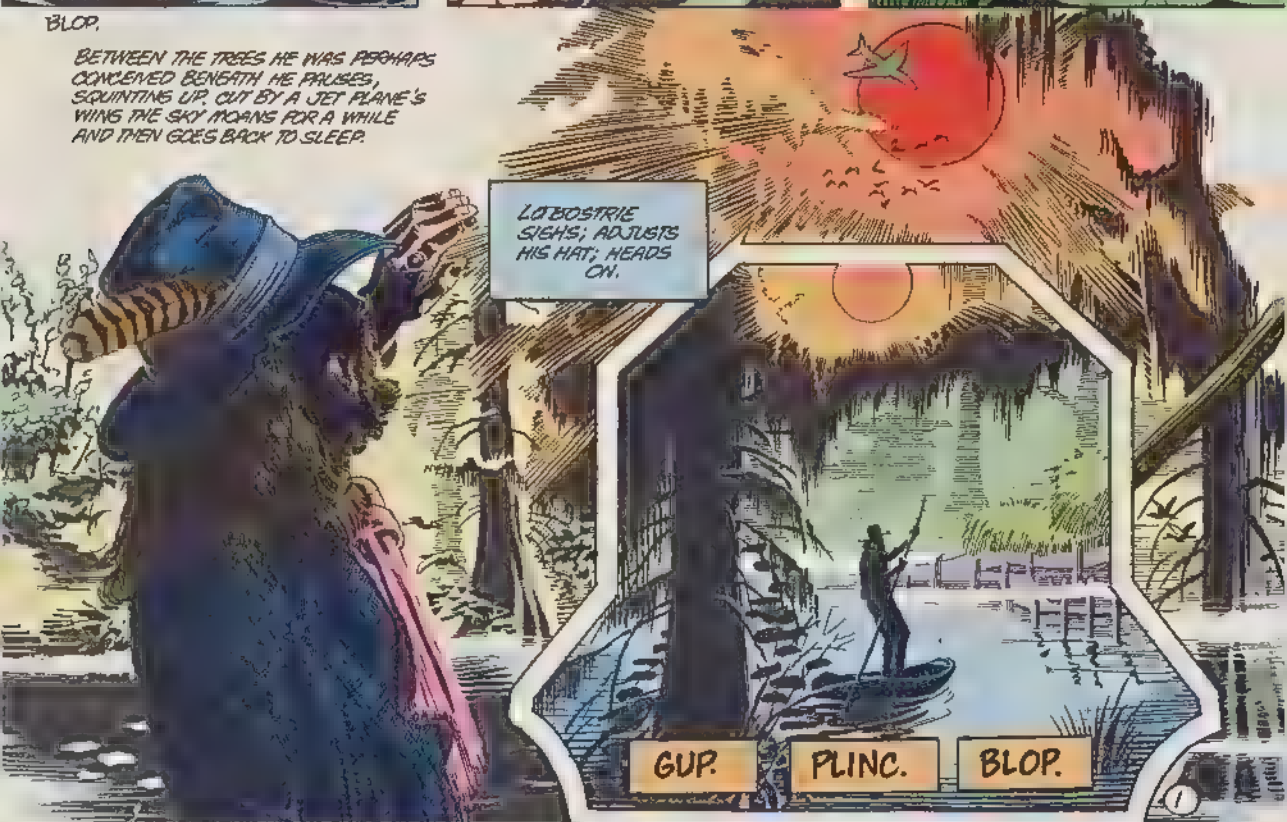

PLIK.
THE MORNING'S EDGE BLURS INTO RIVER FOG. A SMOLDERING FRIEZE, THE DISTANT BANKS CRAWL BY.
BLOP.
THE CLOUDY PANES OF WATER SHATTER QUIETLY, AND SINGLE BIRD-NOTES SWIM AWAY ACROSS THE SURFACE, MERGING WITH THE EERIE SOUNDTRACK OF THE WATERWAYS.
SHLIP.
SPITTING A JEWEL OF GREEN INTO GREEN DEPTHS, GENE LaBOSTRIE SHOULDERS HIS CRAFT INTO A CLOCKLESS, DROWNED CONTINUUM. IMPALED UPON HIS POLE, THE WATER WRITHES.


BLOP.
BETWEEN THE TREES HE WAS PERHAPS CONCEIVED BENEATH HE PAUSES, SQUINTING UP. CUT BY A JET PLANE'S WING THE SKY MOANS FOR A WHILE AND THEN GOES BACK TO SLEEP.
LaBOSTRIE SIGHS; ADJUSTS HIS HAT; HEADS ON.
GUP.
PLINC.
BLOP.

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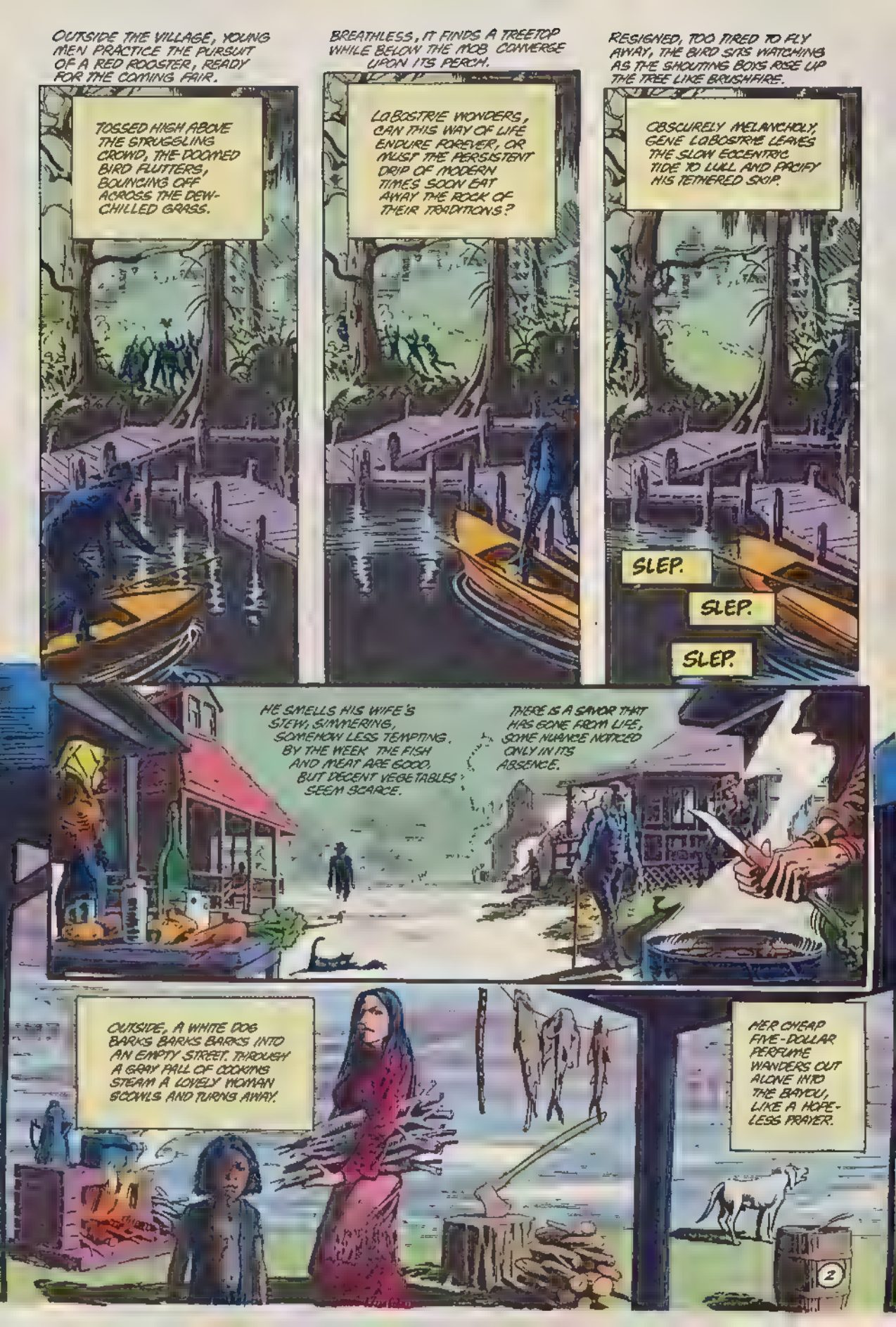
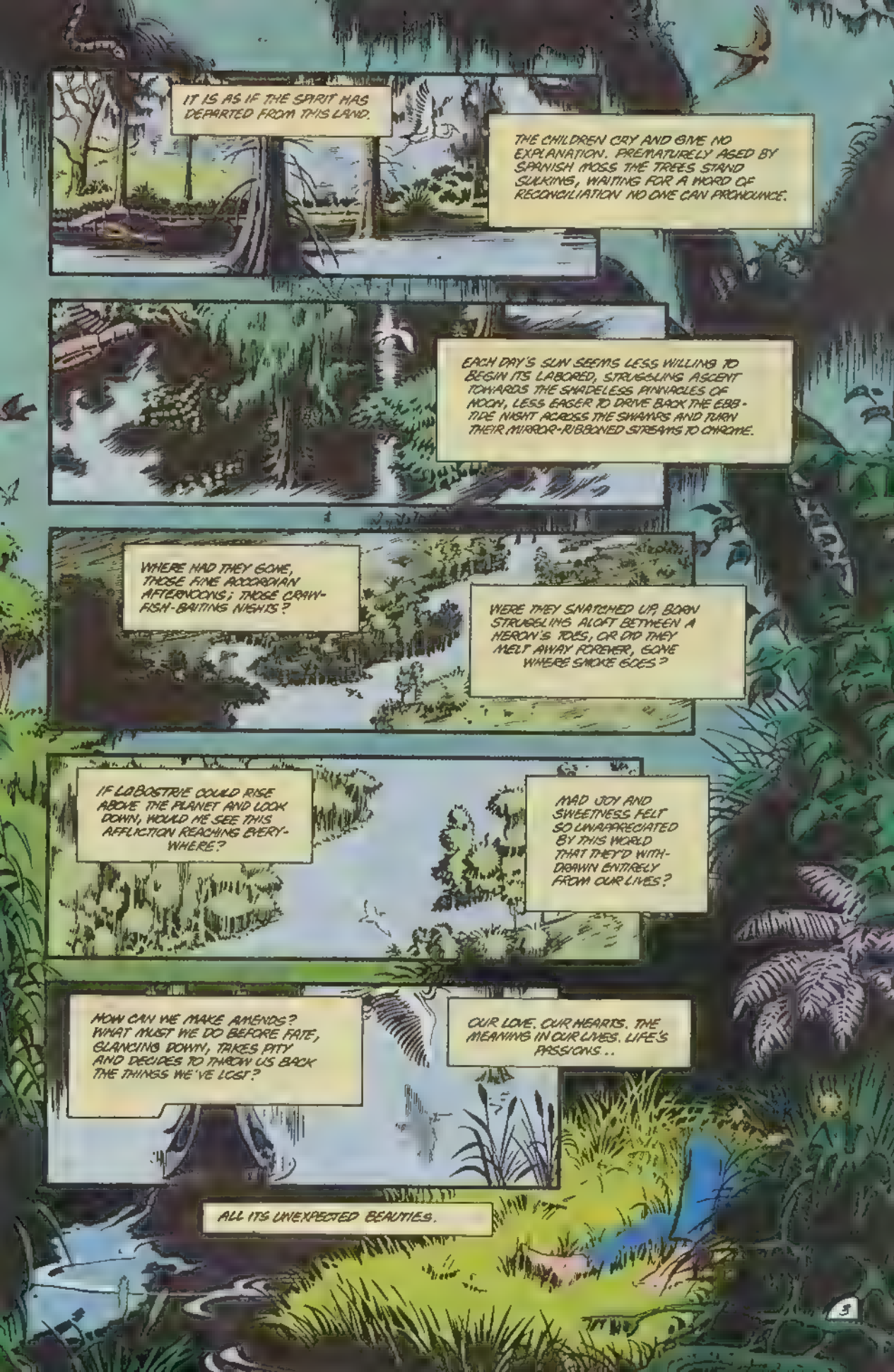

OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE, YOUNG MEN PRACTICE THE PURSUIT OF A RED ROOSTER, READY FOR THE COMING FAIR.
TOSSED HIGH ABOVE THE STRUGGLING CROWD, THE DOOMED BIRD FLUTTERS, BOUNCING OFF ACROSS THE DEW-CHILLED GRASS.
BREATHLESS, IT FINDS A TREETOP WHILE BELOW THE MOB CONVERGE UPON ITS PERCH.
LABOSTRIE WONDERS, CAN THIS WAY OF LIFE ENDURE FOREVER, OR MUST THE PERSISTENT DRIP OF MODERN TIMES SOON EAT AWAY THE ROCK OF THEIR TRADITIONS?
RESIGNED, TOO TIRED TO FLY AWAY, THE BIRD SITS WATCHING AS THE SHOUTING BOYS RISE UP THE TREE LIKE BRUSHFIRE.
OBSCURELY MELANCHOLY, GENE LABOSTRIE LEAVES THE SLOW ECCENTRIC TIDE TO LULL AND PACIFY HIS TETHERED SKIP.
SLEP.
SLEP.
SLEP.
HE SMELLS HIS WIFE'S STEW, SIMMERING, SOMEHOW LESS TEMPTING. BY THE WEEK THE FISH AND MEAT ARE GOOD, BUT DECENT VEGETABLES SEEM SCARCE.
THERE IS A SAVOR THAT HAS GONE FROM LIFE, SOME NUANCE NOTICED ONLY IN ITS ABSENCE.
OUTSIDE, A WHITE DOG BARKS BARKS BARKS INTO AN EMPTY STREET. THROUGH A GRAY PALL OF COOKING STEAM A LOVELY WOMAN SCOWLS AND TURNS AWAY.
HER CHEAP FIVE-DOLLAR PERFUME WANDERS OUT ALONE INTO THE BAYOU, LIKE A HOPELESS PRAYER.
2


IT IS AS IF THE SPIRIT HAS DEPARTED FROM THIS LAND.
THE CHILDREN CRY AND GIVE NO EXPLANATION. PREMATURELY AGED BY SPANISH MOSS THE TREES STAND SULKING, WAITING FOR A WORD OF RECONCILIATION NO ONE CAN PRONOUNCE.
EACH DAY'S SUN SEEMS LESS WILLING TO BEGIN ITS LABORED, STRUGGLING ASCENT TOWARDS THE SHADELESS PINNACLES OF NOON, LESS EAGER TO DRIVE BACK THE EBB-TIDE NIGHT ACROSS THE SWAMPS AND TURN THEIR MIRROR-RIBBONED STREAMS TO CHROME.
WHERE HAD THEY GONE, THOSE FINE ACCORDIAN AFTERNOONS; THOSE CRAWFISH-BAITING NIGHTS?
WERE THEY SNATCHED UP, BORN STRUGGLING ALOFT BETWEEN A HERON'S TOES, OR DID THEY MELT AWAY FOREVER, GONE WHERE SMOKE GOES?
IF LOBOSTRIE COULD RISE ABOVE THE PLANET AND LOOK DOWN, WOULD HE SEE THIS AFFLICTION REACHING EVERYWHERE?
MAD JOY AND SWEETNESS FELT SO UNAPPRECIATED BY THIS WORLD THAT THEY'D WITHDRAWN ENTIRELY FROM OUR LIVES?
HOW CAN WE MAKE AMENDS? WHAT MUST WE DO BEFORE FATE, GLANCING DOWN, TAKES PITY AND DECIDES TO THROW US BACK THE THINGS WE'VE LOST?
OUR LOVE. OUR HEARTS. THE MEANING IN OUR LIVES. LIFE'S PASSIONS..
ALL ITS UNEXPECTED BEAUTIES.

RETURN OF THE GOOD GUMBO
SWAMP THING
CREATED BY LEN WEIN & BERNI WRIGHTSON
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MMMM.

I NEVER FELT THIS HAPPY, NOT IN MY WHOLE LIFE! I... I'M ALMOST GLAD I LOST YOU, JUST TO GET YOU BACK.

THEN... OUR SEPARATION... HAS LEFT... NO LASTING SCARS...?

NO. I FEEL STRONGER, KNOWING I CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT YOU...

...JUST LIKE I FEEL DELIRIOUS KNOWING I DON'T HAVE TO.

YES. THE MONTHS APART... HAVE ALSO BEEN... A TIME OF GROWTH... FOR ME. I'VE BEEN SO FAR... AND LEARNED SO MUCH...

"THE BLUE WORLD... WHERE I LEARNED... JUST HOW INSIDIOUS A TRAP... IS SOLITUDE...

"THAT MAD HALF-LIVING / HALF-MACHINE ENVIRONMENT... THAT MAY HAVE BEEN A NIGHTMARE... SUFFERED BETWEEN WORLDS...

"THE FASCINATING FLORA-CULTURE OF U336...

"THE STERILE WASTES OF RANN... WHERE I HELPED THEM TO END THEIR..."

...BUT THAT IS ENOUGH. I SHALL NOT BORE YOU... WITH MY TALES OF SPACE...

...WHILE THIS WORLD PROMISES... SO VERY MUCH...

YEAH. ISN'T IT A LOVELY DAY? THIS IS THE FIRST WEEK OF SPRING, YOU KNOW?

UH, I GUESS YOU DID, RIGHT?

I GUESS EARTH ELEMENTALS PROBABLY GET NOTIFIED FIRST ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT.

GEE. LOOK AT THE RIVER, WITH ALL THAT MIST. TOO BAD WE DON'T HAVE A BOAT.

OH... I THINK..WE COULD ARRANGE ONE...

WHERE FROM? WE CAN'T JUST...

SOME ..MINOR.. STRUCTURAL WORK...

ALEC? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

DON'T.. BE ALARMED.

GLAK

PLUTCH

FLET

BUT WHAT...OOOHHH! HAHAHAHAHA!

ALEC, THAT'S GREAT! WILL IT WORK?

FELCH

GLOT

SLUK

PLEC

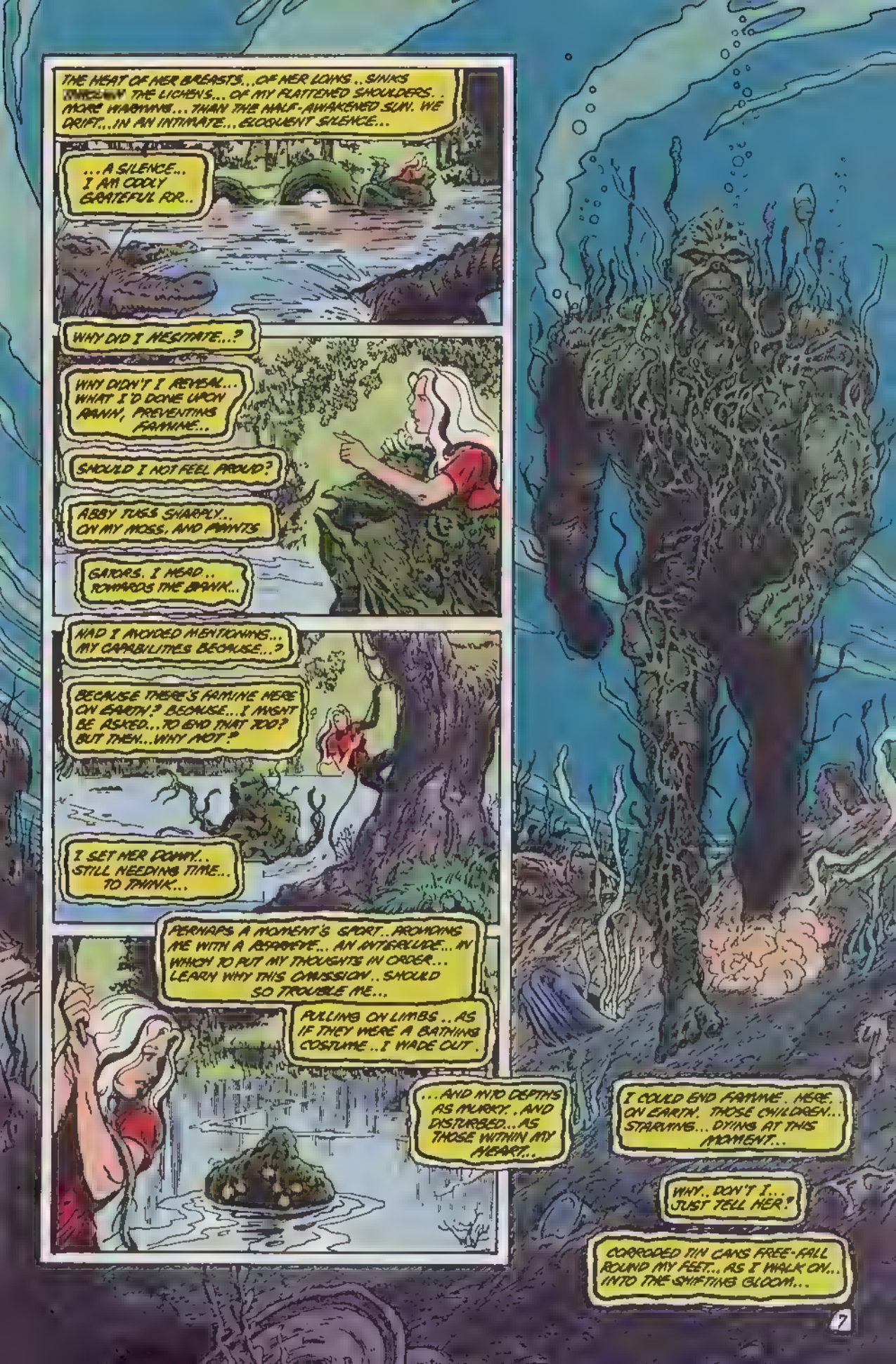
WHY NOT TRY IT... AND SEE...?

WHUUUP

HEY! HOLD IT STEADY THERE. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO HOLD ON TO...

OKAY.

OKAY, I'M IN. TAKE IT AWAY.


THE HEAT OF HER BREASTS...OF HER LOINS..SINKS INTO THE LICHENS... OF MY FLATTENED SHOULDERS.. MORE WARMING... THAN THE HALF-AWAKENED SUN. WE DRIFT...IN AN INTIMATE... ELOQUENT SILENCE...
...A SILENCE... I AM COOLY GRATEFUL FOR..
WHY DID I HESITATE...?
WHY DIDN'T I REVEAL... WHAT I'D DONE UPON RANNY, PREVENTING FAMINE...
SHOULD I NOT FEEL PROUD?
ABBY TUGS SHARPLY... ON MY MOSS, AND PANTS
GATORS. I HEAD.. TOWARDS THE BANK..
HAD I AVOIDED MENTIONING... MY CAPABILITIES BECAUSE...?
BECAUSE THERE'S FAMINE HERE ON EARTH? BECAUSE... I MIGHT BE ASKED...TO END THAT TOO? BUT THEN...WHY NOT?
I SET HER DOWN.. STILL NEEDING TIME... TO THINK...
PERHAPS A MOMENT'S SPORT.. PROMISING ME WITH A REPRIEVE... AN INTERLUDE... IN WHICH TO PUT MY THOUGHTS IN ORDER... LEARN WHY THIS OMISSION.. SHOULD SO TROUBLE ME...
PULLING ON LIMBS .. AS IF THEY WERE A BATHING COSTUME .. I WADE OUT.
...AND INTO DEPTHS AS MURKY.. AND DISTURBED... AS THOSE WITHIN MY HEART...
I COULD END FAMINE.. HERE.. ON EARTH. THOSE CHILDREN... STARVING... DYING AT THIS MOMENT...
WHY.. DON'T I... JUST TELL HER?
CORRODED TIN CANS FREE-FALL ROUND MY FEET... AS I WALK ON... INTO THE SHIFTING GLOOM...

ONE OF THE MONSTERS HUNTS FOR ME... DROPPING BENEATH THE WATER.. WITH A STRANGLER'S SILENCE... BELLYING THROUGH THE UMBER, RIVER-BOTTOM CLOUDS... AN IRON-GREEN TORPEDO... HIDDEN FROM ALL SIGHT, YET DANGEROUS... LIKE A SUPRESSED ANXIETY...

ENCIRCLING ITS COLD, SLICK GIRTH... WITH ARMS DESIGNED TO HOLD.. ABUNDANT FRUITS ALOFT FOR CENTURIES... I WRESTLE WITH IT... STRUGGLING TO DEFINE BY TOUCH ... A SHAPE OBSCURED BY SEPIA...

I COULD DO IT.

I COULD RESTORE AFRICA'S CRUMBLING TERRAIN... TO THE LOAM FROM WHICH... RICH JUNGLES SPRANG..

... AND WHY STOP THERE? WHY NOT REBUILD THE FORESTS... OF THE AMAZON.. LESS GREEN NOW... THAN AN AVERAGE SUBURBIA... AND SHRINKING BY THE DAY?

THE CONCEPT... WRITHES UNCOMFORTABLY... WITHIN MY GRASP... BUT I HOLD TIGHT...

I COULD DROP GRAPES... INTO THE MOUTHS... OF ALL THE HUNGRY CHILDREN... TURN THE GOBI AND SAHARA... INTO GREEN AND RIPPLING MEADOWS... GIVE THE WIDOWS ROSES... AND THE OLD MEN STRAWBERRIES..

FOR AM I NOT A GOD? I COULD TOUCH ALL THE WORLD... WITH GORGEOUS WILDERNESS... AS I TOUCHED GOTHAM... COULD TRANSFORM THIS PLANET... TO A SPHERE OF COLORS... PERFUMES... AND FULL BELLIES.

I COULD SAVE MANKIND.

I COULD DO ANYTHING.

ANYTHING.

MIND STILL REELING... BRIEFLY SATED WITH EXHILARATION... I LET THE ENTIRE SUBJECT DROP... WATCHING IT FALL AWAY BENEATH ME... GOING BACK TO THRUST ITS SNOUT... INTO THE SILT AND SEDIMENT... OF THE MIND'S LOWER REACHES, WHENCE IT CAME...

MY VICTORY ASSURED... I LET IT GO...

...FOR THE MOMENT.

HEY! THAT WAS GREAT! YOU LOOKED LIKE ROY ROGERS...

...WELL, YOU KNOW, IF YOU LEFT HIM IN A DARK CORNER OF THE REFRIGERATOR FOR A COUPLE MONTHS.

AND I LIKED *TRIGGER*, TOO CAN WE *ADOPT* ONE LIKE THAT?

NOT UNLESS. . YOU WISH TO BE THE ONE .. WHO TRIES TO FLUSH IT... DOWN THE TOILET.. WHEN YOU'RE *BORED* WITH IT...

SHALL WE.. WALK SOME MORE...?

SURE. ROY AND DALE HITTING THE HAPPY TRAILS TOGETHER, RIGHT. HO-DEE TODOOILS ♫ TO YOOO. .

CHESTER WAS PLAYING THAT THE LAST TIME WE HAD AN *ECO* GROUP MEETING AT HIS PLACE IN *BATON ROUGE*...

HERE I *COME*. DON'T *DROP* ME...

UMMF.: Y'KNOW, THIS *ECOLOGY* WORK, YOU'D REALLY BE *PROUD* OF US.

I CANNOT *IMAGINE* ANY CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE I WOULD *NOT*.. BE PROUD OF YOU...

AAAH, YOU SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO CHEAP TO BUY *CHOCOLATES*.

NO, SERIOUSLY, THERE WAS TALK ABOUT DUMPING *WASTE* HERE, BUT WE KICKED UP, SO THEY *ABANDONED* THE IDEA.

UH, WELL, THAT IS, THEY DUMPED IT *SOMEPLACE ELSE*.

SEE, THAT'S IT. YOU HOLD THE LINE *ONE* PLACE, YOUR PROBLEM'S JUST DUMPED ON SOME *OTHER* PERSON'S DOORSTEP.

SOMETIMES I THINK FOR US TO *REALLY* HELP THE ENVIRONMENT, WE'D NEED A DIFFERENT *WORLD*...

SOMEPLACE THAT TAUGHT PEOPLE HOW EVERYTHING FROM THE ENVIRONMENT TO POLITICS WAS *CONNECTED*, TAUGHT THEM TO *THINK* AND TAKE *RESPONSIBILITY*...

I SEE PEOPLE *WORKING* ON THAT, BUT IT NEVER GETS OFF THE *GROUND*.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE. . *DISPIRITED*. .

PERHAPS THIS NEW *WORLD*. . IS CLOSER THAN YOU *THINK*. . READY TO SOAR ALOFT . . FROM THE ASHES OF THE *OLD*.

YEAH. I GUESS YOU'RE *RIGHT* IT'S *OUR* PLANET. WE CAN *SAVE* IT, IF WE *TRY* HARD ENOUGH.

THAT WAS NOT QUITE . . WHAT I *MEANT*.

SHE SHOOTS A QUESTION-ING GLANCE . . BUT DOES NOT PRESS THE MATTER . . KNOWING I'LL SPEAK FURTHER WHEN I'M READY . . . KNOWING ME . . KNOWING ALL OF MY WAYS . .

WE WALK . . . THE TREES LENDING OUR SILENCE *FORM* . . . AN EASTER ISLAND HUSH, OBSERVED IN DEFERENCE . . . TO THESE GIANT, ANCIENT PRESENCES.

SINCE MY RETURN WE'VE KISSED . . . SPOKEN . . . EMBRACED . . AND NOTHING MORE.

THE THING UNDONE . . . HANGS IN THE AIR BETWEEN US . . . INVESTING THAT MOST SLENDER SPACE . . . WITH MORE SIGNIFI-CANCE . . . THAN WE OURSELVES POSSESS.

ONLY WHEN OUR DISPLACED DESIRE . . . SEEMS TO CHARGE EVERY BREEZE . . . AND BLADE OF GRASS . . . DO WE STOP WALKING . . .

FACE EACH OTHER . . .

SMILE.

SO MUCH CONVEYED... SO LITTLE SAID...

HAVING SEEN FURTHER SUNS... I'VE WITNESSED NOTHING... SO INFLAMING... AS THE SHYNESS OF OLD LOVERS... BECOME FASCINATING STRANGERS ONCE AGAIN...

SHE HOLDS THE DISCONNECTED TUBER GENTLY... JUST AS IF IT WERE MY HAND.

THE MOMENT SWELLS... ITS SURFACE TENSION... PRESSING ON OUR FACES; LEGS...

I AM THE GRASS BENEATH HER FEET... THE TUBER HELPLESS IN HER HANDS... WAITING, AS LIPS PART... BEFORE HER TONGUE... A MINIATURE ROSE MANTA... REINED BY SILVER SPITTLE THREADS...

SHE DIPS HER HEAD...

SKUNCH

I FEEL HER BREATH... UPON MY SOIL-FLECKED SKIN...

PUNCTURED... THE MOMENT BURSTS... IS GONE... AND TIME OUTSIDE OF TIME BEGINS...

ABBY...

THROUGH ALL MY LONELY ORBITING.. YOU WERE THE PLANET... I THE SATELLITE.. UNTIL YOUR GRAVITY RECLAIMED ME... BROUGHT ME HOME...

YOUR CORNFLOWER POOLS... THE RAIN-STREAKED ALABASTER CLOUDS... GUSTING ABOUT YOUR RUSHMORE PEAKS... THE DUNES AND SNOWBANKS OF YOU..

A SCENTED FOREST... BRAMBLES BOWED BENEATH A DEW THAT'S SOFT... YET SHARP UPON THE TONGUE... THE MOUTH OF A VOLCANO, WREATHED IN STEAM... A FIREWELL SUNK INTO YOUR CORE... INTO YOUR RED, ORE-FLOODED HEART..

IT IS NOT LUST ALONE.. SPEEDS MY MAGELLAN HANDS, FILLS OUT THEIR SAILS... YET LUST IS THERE.

I AM... STILL MAN ENOUGH... TO KNOW ITS CHARMS...

SHE LOVES ME..

MAKING TINY MEASURED CRIES... AS IF SLOWLY IMMERSED... IN WATER THAT'S TOO ICY. OR TOO HOT.. HER FINGERS SCRABBLE... UNLEASHED DOGS UPON MY PARK-GREEN BACK. SHREDDED AND CRUSHED... SMALL LEAVES AND PETALS FALL ..

SHE LOVES ME NOT.

I AM THE LIMPET-ARMORED ROCK... SHE IS THE TIDE... THE WHITE FOAM STREAMING DOWN HER NECK... HER SHOULDERS... SEA AND SHORE WE CLASH TOGETHER... FALL ASUNDER... CLASH TOGETHER, FALL...

SHE LOVES ME.

THERE IS A TENDER JUNCTION... WHERE THE WORLDS OF PLANT AND ANIMAL CONVERGE... I AM THE VELDT.. HER MUSCLES FLOW ACROSS ME LIKE A HERD... OF SLEEK AND LEAPING IBEX... AND SHE'S HOWLING LIKE A ZOO... SHE'S SCREAMING LIKE A JUNGLE FIRE...

SHE LOVES ME NOT.

HER WORLD AND MINE... LOCKED INTO A COLLISON ORBIT... SPINNING FASTER... WINDING TIGHTER... DESPERATE FOR OUR FINAL IMPACT... OUR SUBLIME APOCALYPSE, AND OH

AND OH

AND OH

AND OH SHE LOVES ME.

...AND HAVING... LOVED... SHE SLEEPS.

IT IS A HUMAN THING... TO AFFIRM LIFE SO FIERCELY AND SO PHYSICALLY.. SURRENDERING THE BODY... TO SOME ANCIENT AND VESTIGIAL PELVIC BRAIN.. AND, HAVING DONE THIS... TO ALLOW ALL SUCH VITALITY TO CEASE... TO STRIKE A CONTRAST... BETWEEN THOSE RED, CARNAL MOMENTS... AND THE BLUE, ENDURING COMA-HOURS...

IT IS A HUMAN THING.

...BUT I AM NOT... AND WHILE SHE SLEEPS... I LIE AWAKE...

THOUGH FLESH MUST REST... SUCH ANIMAL REQUIREMENTS ARE BEHIND ME NOW... MY ONLY HUMAN URGES THOSE... THAT I MYSELF HAVE CHOSEN TO RETAIN...

THE REST WERE BURNED WITH ALEC HOLLAND... ON THE NIGHT HE DIED... THE NIGHT HIS COZY, REASSURING WORLD ERUPTED.. BLOSSOMED INTO AN ENORMOUS ROSE OF PURGING FIRE...

...AND HE WENT DOWN INTO THE SWAMP.. FALLING AWAY BENEATH ITS SURFACE... BURNING STILL... A HALF-SPENT NAVAL FLARE THAT BLAZED LIKE LIFE ITSELF... SPUTTERED... AND FINALLY WENT OUT...

THE SWAMP DEVOURED HIM... THROUGH A THOUSAND MOUTHS OF RUSSET GREEN... REDUCED HIM TO A CARCASS... ALGAE-SPATTERED... PITIFUL... PICKED CLEAN.. YET FROM THOSE WRETCHED LEFTOVERS... THERE CAME A WOODLAND GOD... SUCH AS THERE HAD AT OTHER TIMES... ON COUNTLESS PREVIOUS OCCASIONS... WITH EVENTS SIMILARLY CONTRIVED...

...ENDING WITH ROASTED MEN... AT REST UPON A RIVER BED...

WHEN WITH THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES.. DOWN BY THE SLOW GREEN TEFE'S SOURCE .. I GLIMPSED WITHIN THEIR MINDS A DYNASTY.. SPANNING THE EONS... REACHING BACK TO TIMES BEFORE MANKIND... WHOSE ONLY RECORD NOW... IS ETCHED ON SHEETS OF COAL, FAR UNDERGROUND..

A DYNASTY OF GODS... YET GODS WHO'VE CHOSEN NEVER TO EXERT THEIR POWER... CONTENT TO SIT AND STARE... INTO THE SHIMMERING BLUE BRAZILIAN SKY... AND GAZE UNBLINKING... AT THE FURIOUS EYE... OF THE MONSOON...

IN THE PRE-CAMBRIAN... WHEN ALL THE WORLD WAS WEEDS... AND NOTHING CRAWLED... OR SWAM... OR FLEW... THE EARTHGODS RULED THE LAST NON-VIOLENT ERA... 'TIL THE SUN GROWS RED AND SWOLLEN ...AND ALL LIFE IS FLED...

THEY COULD HAVE MADE THEIR KINGDOM OF THE PLANTS... AS PERFECT AS I'LL MAKE THIS WORLD OF MEN... AND THERE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN NEED.. FOR ANY OTHER FORM OF LIFE. THEY COULD HAVE KEPT... THIS PLANET FOR THEIR OWN... AND YET DID NOT..

I WONDER WHY?

INSTEAD... THEY LET THE FISH GLIDE IN... UPON THE WILD, SILURIAN TIDE... AND TOOK THEIR FORMS... AND PLAYED WITH THEM... YET NEVER MADE THIS WORLD A COOL PISCEAN PARADISE...

...NOR WHEN THE FISH WITH LEGS BOILED UP... FROM THE DEVONIAN MUD.. DID THEY IMPOSE REPTILIAN UTOPIA... BUT WATCHED INSTEAD... DELIGHTING IN THE DAZZLING DIVERSITY.. OF SHAPES AND SHADES...

COMPOSED OF CYCADS AND JURASSIC FERNS... THEY'D IMITATE THE UPSTART BEASTS... FRIGHTENING THUNDER-LIZARDS OFF... WITH THUNDER OF THEIR OWN.
IN THE CRETACEOUS... WHEN THE EARTH GREW TIRED OF SAURIANS... ERASING THEM WITH FROST... TURNING HER HAND INSTEAD TO APES AND CHERRY-TREES... HER GUARDIANS MADE NO MOVE... TO STAY THAT HAND... AND LET THE AGE OF DINOSAURS ENDURE..
...BUT MOURNED THEIR LOSS... WHILE FINDING CONSOLATION... IN THE EARTH'S FIRST FLOWERS... SPRUNG FROM THE MUD.. WHERE THOSE VAST BODIES FELL.
IS THIS, THEN, WHAT IT IS TO BE A GOD?
TO KNOW, AND NEVER DO? TO WATCH THE WORLD WIND BY... AND IN ITS WINDINGS FIND CONTENT...?
IF I SHOULD FEED THE WORLD. . HEAL ALL THE WOUNDS MAN'S SMOLDERING INDUSTRIES HAVE MADE... WHAT WOULD HE DO? WOULD HE RENOUNCE... THE WEALTH HIS SAWMILLS BRING. STEP GENTLY ON THE FLOWERS INSTEAD... AND PLUCK EACH APPLE WITH RESPECT. FOR THIS ABUNDANT WORLD... IN ALL ITS PROVIDENCE...?
NO.
HE WOULD PUMP MORE POISONS BUILD MORE MINES... SAFE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I STOOD ON HAND... TO MEND THE BIOSPHERE.. ENDLESSLY COVERING THE SCARS. . HE COULD NOW ENDLESSLY INFLICT.
SOMEWHERE THE PARLIAMENT STAND ROOTED.. INERT AND OMNIPOTENT... WHILE TINY SPIDERS DRAPE THEIR RIBS IN SILK...
AFTER THIS NIGHT OF REVERIE... AT LAST I COMPREHEND THEIR STANCE.
16

I CANNOT MEND THE WORLD.. WITHOUT COMMITTING GREATER WRONGS.. YET HAVE NO WISH...TO BE ETERNALLY EXPOSED TO ALL ITS PAINS...

MANKIND MUST STAND OR FALL... BY ITS MERITS ALONE... SAVE FOR THIS ONE.

THIS ONE I'LL KEEP WITH ME... UNTIL SHE DIES... BEYOND, IF I AM ABLE...

HER EYELIDS FLUTTER... MOTHS THAT STRUGGLE.. TO ESCAPE SLEEP'S VIVID MIRE...

I SIT AND THINK ON THIS...THEN ...HAVING MADE MY TERRIBLE DECISION.. THINK NO MORE

SHE BREAKFASTS ON FRESH FRUIT... I WATCH HER WIPE JUICE FROM HER CHIN...LEAVING A GLAZE...OF TIGHTENED SKIN.. UPON HER HAND'S BACKSIDE..AND AFTER THAT... WE WALK.

SHE SMILES. WE KISS... TASTING THE NEW DAY.. SAMPLING ALL ITS FLAVORS.. ALL ITS PROMISES...

GEE, THIS IS *NICE* HOW LONG'S IT GONNA *LAST*?

FOREVER IF YOU WISH...

IF YOU DESIRE..THERE NEED BE NO MORE *HORROR*..OR *ADVENTURE*..

OH *YEAH*? LIKE OVER *THERE*, MAYBE?

FACE IT, THEY DON'T BUILD *DREAM*-HOMES OUT IN NEIGHBORHOODS LIKE *THIS*.

WE COULD SIMPLY SETTLE *DOWN* LOCATE A PLACE THAT SUITS US BOTH...

PERHAPS THEY *DON'T*.

IT MATTERS *NOT*.

I... DID NOT INTEND.

... TO ASK THEM.

GLESH

"ALEC...? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"

"WHAT I...SHOULD HAVE DONE... LONG AGO...

"I'M TIRED...OF QUESTS AND ENEMIES...MANKIND MUST LEARN...TO MANUFACTURE... GLORIES OF ITS OWN...AND TO ATONE...FOR ALL ITS SINS... WITHOUT MY PROMPTING...OR MY AID.

"IT IS...THE ONLY WAY... THEY'LL GROW...

"THE WAY OF THE WOOD.

"BUT... ALL THIS STUFF THAT'S COMING UP. WHAT'S...?"

"IT IS OUR RETIREMENT, ABBY...YOURS AND MINE... BORN OF THE EARTH AS PAYMENT... FOR THE SERVICES WE'VE RENDERED...

"WHY NOT? WHY SHOULD WE TWO... NOT LIVE AS ONE...? IS IT NOT OUR... MOST BASIC RIGHT?

"THE RIGHT OF ALL... HAVE THEY THE WIT... AND GRACE TO SEE IT...BUT THAT IS NOT OUR CONCERN...

"SEE, ABBY...

"SEE HOW ITS COLORS BURN... ALL NEW AND GLISTENING... SEE ITS SMOOTHNESS...AND ITS STRENGTH REVEALED...A SYMPHONY OF LINE...A CHORD OF HARMONY UNITING FORM WITH FUNCTION...AND UTILITY WITH OPULENCE.

"SEE."

"OH.

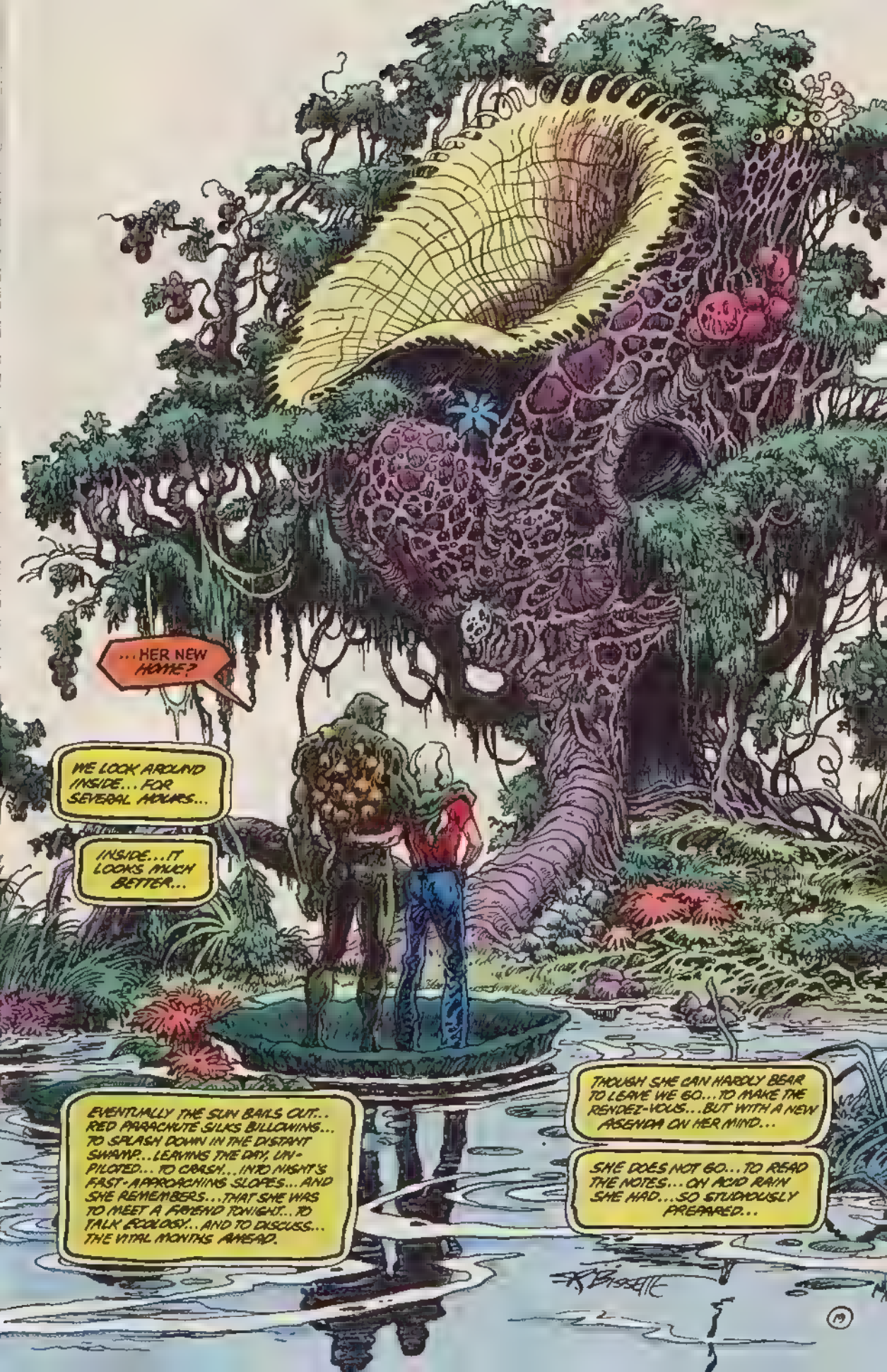
"OH, ALEC, IT'S...

"CAN WE GO IN? DOES IT HAVE ROOMS? OH, GOD, IT'S JUST LIKE, I DUNNO, A FAIRYTALE OR SOMETHING...

"BUT HOW DO WE REACH IT? DO WE GO AROUND THE BACK, OR...?"

"NO.

"I HAVE ARRANGED...A LILY PAD. HOW ELSE...SHOULD A HANS ANDERSON PRINCESS... TRANSPORT HERSELF.. TO HER CASTLE..."


...HER NEW HOME?
WE LOOK AROUND INSIDE... FOR SEVERAL HOURS...
INSIDE... IT LOOKS MUCH BETTER...
EVENTUALLY THE SUN BAILS OUT... RED PARACHUTE SILKS BILLOWING... TO SPLASH DOWN IN THE DISTANT SWAMP... LEAVING THE DAY, UN-PILOTED... TO CRASH... INTO NIGHT'S FAST-APPROACHING SLOPES... AND SHE REMEMBERS... THAT SHE WAS TO MEET A FRYEND TONIGHT... TO TALK ECOLOGY... AND TO DISCUSS... THE VITAL MONTHS AHEAD.
THOUGH SHE CAN HARDLY BEAR TO LEAVE WE GO... TO MAKE THE RENDEZ-VOUS... BUT WITH A NEW AGENDA ON HER MIND...
SHE DOES NOT GO... TO READ THE NOTES... ON ACID RAIN SHE HAD... SO STUDIOUSLY PREPARED...
R. BISSETTE
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SHE GOES TO SAY GOODBYE.
ABBY! FAR OUT! I DID FIND THE RIGHT MEETING-PLACE AFTER ALL.
UH, LISTEN, I BROUGHT SOMEBODY ALONG, I HOPE THAT'S COOL AND EVERYTHING...
IT'S FINE.
I BROUGHT SOMEBODY TOO.
WOW.
HEY. HEY, GOOD TO SEE YOU. Y'KNOW, YOU TWO BEING BACK TOGETHER, IT'S A REAL TRIP...
YES. YES IT IS... AND I'M AFRAID IT'S A TRIP WE MIGHT NOT BE BACK FROM FOR SOME TIME.
HUH?
CHESTER, LOOK, I KNOW THIS COMES AT A BAD TIME, FOR THE GROUP AND EVERYTHING, BUT...
WELL, ALEC AND ME, WE'RE GOING TO DROP OUT OF SIGHT FOR A WHILE. WE'RE GOING TO LIVE IN THE SWAMPS.
CHESTER, I'M REALLY SORRY...
SORRY? ARE YOU CRAZY? THAT'S THE BEST THING I'VE HEARD ALL YEAR!
HELL, THAT'S THE BEST THING I'VE HEARD THIS INCARNATION! BOY, IF ANYBODY EVER DESERVED SOME R$R, YOU WAIT 'TIL I TELL LIZ...
HEY! LIZ!
LIZ?
OH GOD, I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT LIZ...
YEAH... I STOPPED BY TO SEE IF SHE COULD USE A WALK AND SHE SAID "YEAH." HEY LIZ! ABBY AND THE SWAMP GUY ARE SHACKING UP OUT IN THE SWAMP!
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A-ABBY? IS THIS TRUE..?
OH, LIZ, I'M SORRY. WHAT WAS I THINKING OF? I JUST GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE IDEA, AND...
LIZ, FORGIVE ME. I WON'T LEAVE YOU ALONE, I PROMISE.
UH, WELL, LISTEN, I DUNNO, BUT...
WELL, MAYBE I COULD HELP OUT. I, I COULD CALL ON LIZ MOST EVERY DAY. I COULD EVEN, UH...
WELL, YOU HAVE SOME SPARE ROOMS THERE, I COULD EVEN, UH..
WELL, MOVE IN, IF UH, IF LIZ WANTED ME TO.
THAT IS.
I...
YES.
YES PLEASE.
BUT... I MEAN, ARE YOU SURE?
AND LIKE, WHAT ABOUT THE EDD GROUP? THERE'S SO MUCH WORK...
AND THERE'S PLENTY OF PEOPLE TO HANDLE IT. TWO MORE JOINED TODAY. YOU REMEMBER THAT MONROE GUY I MET AT THE HOSPITAL? HE'S ONE, AND SOME WOMAN FROM NEW ORLEANS.
DON'T WORRY, AB. THE ENVIRONMENT'S SAFE WITH US.
YES.
YES... I DO BELIEVE... THAT IT MIGHT BE...
A-ALEC?
ALEC HOLLAND? I REMEMBER...
I REMEMBER I WROTE A BOOK ABOUT YOU, IT... IT SOLD LOTS OF COPIES.
OH, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN...

YOU TOO, LIZ...
YOUR BOOK... WAS GOOD. PERHAPS... YOU'LL WRITE... ANOTHER ONE, SOMEDAY...
OH. OH NO, I COULDN'T. I...
DO YOU THINK I COULD?
I AM SURE... THAT WITH YOUR COURAGE... YOU CAN BOTH DO ANYTHING.
YES. YES, I GUESS SO. I...
ABBY? SHALL WE GO...?
YEAH. YEAH, LET'S GO OR I'M GONNA GET ALL STUPID.
GOODBYE, CHESTER. YOU CAN COME AND VISIT US, I PROMISE.
...AND YOU LOOK AFTER LIZ. I MEAN REALLY LOOK AFTER HER, OKAY?
I WILL. DON'T WORRY.
LIZ...
LISTEN, YOU TAKE CARE. AND LISTEN.. WHEN I WAS ALONE, AND YOU WERE ALONE, IT WASN'T JUST ME HELPING YOU, OKAY?
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT.
OH ABBY...
ABBY, GOODBYE.
YEAH. YEAH, GOODBYE...
COME ON, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.
GOODBYE...
YES. GOODBYE... CHESTER... LIZ...
SURE. G'BYE. GOOD LUCK!
YES. YES, GOOD LUCK...
:FNFF:
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UH... HELLO? DO YOU SPEAK *ENGLISH?*

PARLOUR-VOOZE ONGLAZE? I'M A *PHOTOGRAPHER...*

SEE? CAMERA. *CA-MER-RA.*

I WORK FOR A *LO-CAL PAY-PER...*

EH?

OH, NEVER MIND...

I'M LOOKING FOR A STORY ON THE *SWAMP MAN.* I HEARD HE'S STILL ALIVE AND BACK IN THE SWAMP SOMEPLACE, RIGHT?

YOU KNOW? THE *SWAMP MAN?*

UH... LUH HOMME DUH SWAMP?

EH?

OH GOD, COME *OFF* IT, I *KNOW* YOU SPEAK BETTER ENGLISH THAN *THIS!*

LOOK, THERE'S *BIG MONEY* IN THIS STORY, OKAY? PLENTY BIG MONEY FOR *YOU,* PLENTY BIG MONEY FOR *ME!*

COME ON, WHADDAYA *SAY?*

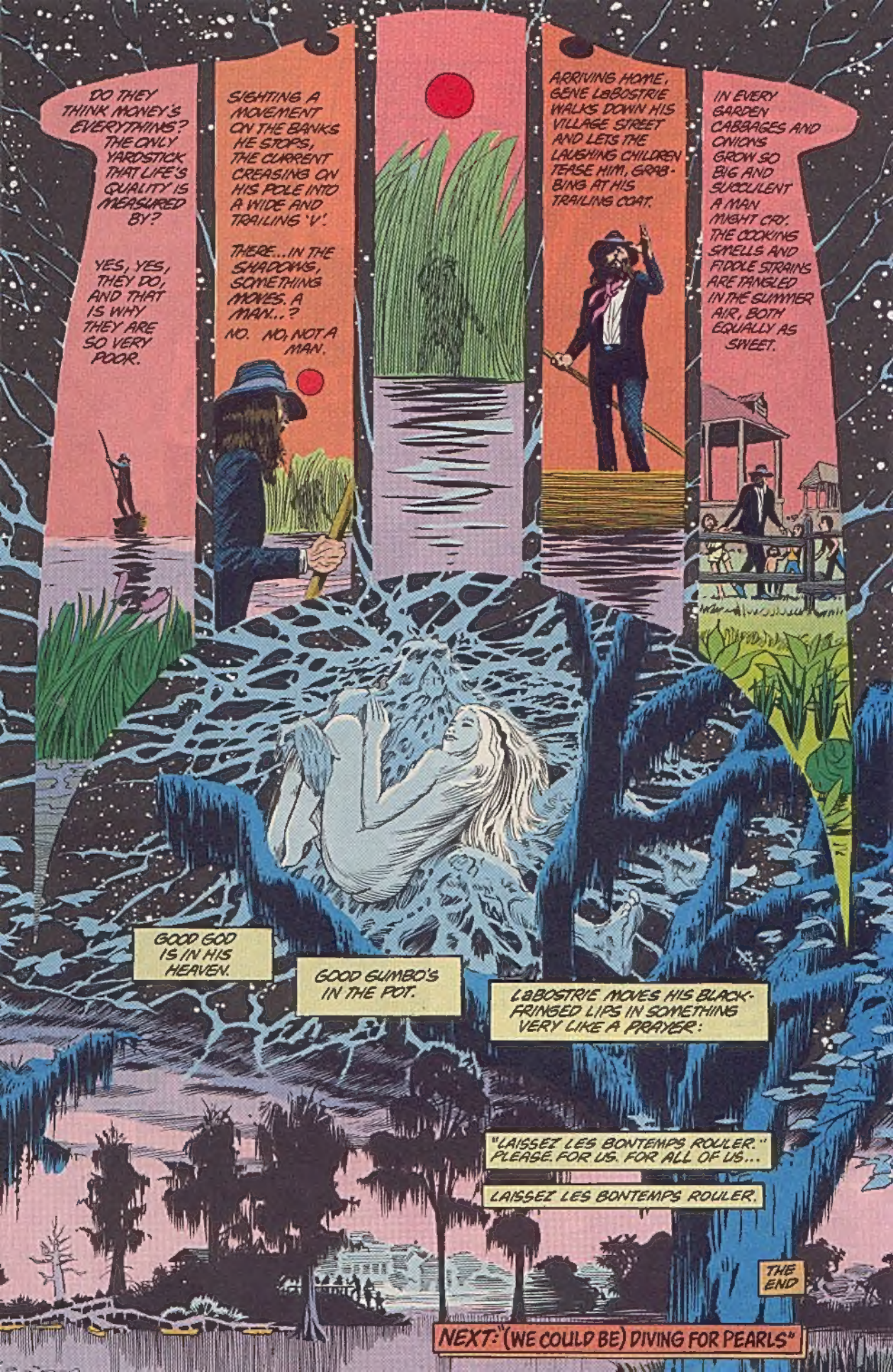
GENE LaBOSTRIE SMILES, SPREADS HIS HANDS IN MIMED APOLOGY, THEN SHOVES HIS CRAFT OUT ON HER FIRST SLOW, PONDEROUS STEP INTO THE CENTER-CURRENT'S SWIFTER, LEANER FLOW...

GATHERING SPEED, HEARING THE SMALL MAN'S PROMISES OF MONEY GROWING SQUEAKIER AND FAINTER AS HE LEAVES THE BANK BEHIND, GENE LaBOSTRIE LAUGHS IN HIS BEARD AND LIFTS HIS POLE AND LETS IT FALL...

GLIT

PLASH

BLOP


DO THEY THINK MONEY'S EVERYTHING? THE ONLY YARDSTICK THAT LIFE'S QUALITY IS MEASURED BY?
YES, YES, THEY DO, AND THAT IS WHY THEY ARE SO VERY POOR.
SIGHTING A MOVEMENT ON THE BANKS HE STOPS, THE CURRENT CREASING ON HIS POLE INTO A WIDE AND TRAILING 'V'.
THERE...IN THE SHADOWS, SOMETHING MOVES. A MAN...?
NO. NO, NOT A MAN.
ARRIVING HOME, GENE LaBOSTRIE WALKS DOWN HIS VILLAGE STREET AND LETS THE LAUGHING CHILDREN TEASE HIM, GRABBING AT HIS TRAILING COAT.
IN EVERY GARDEN CABBAGES AND ONIONS GROW SO BIG AND SUCCULENT A MAN MIGHT CRY. THE COOKING SMELLS AND FIDDLE STRAINS ARE TANGLED IN THE SUMMER AIR, BOTH EQUALLY AS SWEET.
GOOD GOD IS IN HIS HEAVEN.
GOOD GUMBO'S IN THE POT.
LaBOSTRIE MOVES HIS BLACK-FRINGED LIPS IN SOMETHING VERY LIKE A PRAYER:
"LAISSEZ LES BONTEMPS ROULER." PLEASE. FOR US. FOR ALL OF US...
LAISSEZ LES BONTEMPS ROULER.
THE END
NEXT: "(WE COULD BE) DIVING FOR PEARLS"